

The Jane Austen Society



Report for 2019

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Chairman’s Report for 2019	2
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting	2
Branch and Group Reports for 2019	6
Mary Pearson: a Life and a Portrait <i>Sophie Reynolds</i>	17
‘In remembrance of the Library’: The Dispersal and Retrieval of the Books at Godmersham Park <i>Peter Sabor</i>	23
The Digweeds and Steventon <i>Jane Hurst</i>	32
Death Duties on Jane Austen’s Estate <i>John Avery Jones</i>	44
What Became of Mrs Powlett? <i>Stephen Mahony</i>	56
Jane Austen and Andover <i>Diana Coldicott</i>	60
Is This Jane Austen’s Sampler? <i>Alden O’Brien</i>	64
More than words: the latest addition to the collection of letters at Jane Austen’s House <i>Kathryn Sutherland</i>	72
Jane Austen at the School of Ann Radcliffe <i>Emma Clery</i>	77
Sir Thomas More and Jane Austen <i>Ronald Dunning</i>	90
Austen-Leighs, Wilders and Jane Austen’s Bracelet <i>Hazel Jones</i>	93
Jane Austen’s House at 70 <i>Sophie Reynolds</i>	98
Notes on Sales 2019 <i>Christine Penney</i>	104
Jane Austen Studies 2019 <i>Rita J. Dashwood</i>	110
AGM address: ‘We must allow for difference of taste’: Jane Austen, 19th-century publishing and 19th-century readers <i>Gillian Dow</i>	113
Contributors	126
Accounts for year ended December 2019	129

Report for 2019 and a message from the Chairman

2019 saw the election of the Society's new committee, which met for the first time in October. As I foresaw in my report to the AGM, the new set of trustees has proved a happy mixture of old hands and new blood, and we have been getting lots of fresh ideas. 2019 ended with various plans in hand to mark our eightieth anniversary in 2020, but since then the world has changed. I write this shortly after we have taken the decision – less a decision, really, than an inevitability – to cancel the 2020 AGM. Emma Clery, one of the new trustees, is planning a virtual event for the day on which the AGM would have taken place, and I look forward to it keenly.

I expect to tell you more about the trustees and the various kinds of work that they are doing for the Society in next year's *Annual Report*, in whatever equivalent we find for the speeches which would have been delivered to the 2020 AGM. Meanwhile, please welcome (as they say) Hazel Jones (not a trustee), who has taken over editorship of the *Annual Report*, and Marion Davies and Mary Hogg, editors of the *News Letter*. We are grateful also to Brian Joice (not a trustee) for continuing in his long role as the Society's webmaster. In this time of lockdown, when we cannot meet together, these other forms of communication have become more important than ever. It is a great pleasure to know that our publications are in such good hands.

Out in the wider world, the major Austen event, I suppose, was the screening on television of *Sanditon*. What did you think? I found the first episode mainly boring, and oddly enough, I think this was because it was too faithful to the original. No coherent plot seems to be getting shaped in the fragment that Jane left – which brings out how beautifully plotted the six canonical novels are. With the second episode Jane was left behind. I switched off after twenty minutes, finding the dialogue unbearably crude and the two principals inadequate. If anyone wanted a crusty old buffer to complain about it all, I was ready to serve.

Although the present troubles have imposed a new seriousness, we need some humour to cheer us up. If you want an author who can provide both at once, you know where to go.

Richard Jenkyns
Chairman

Minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting held at Chawton House on Saturday 13 July 2019

1. **The President**, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, welcomed members and their guests to the 63rd Annual General Meeting and observed that his function, as usual, was to make the housekeeping announcements.

2. **The Chairman** said that formal apologies had been received from Deirdre Le Faye and Olive Drakes.

3. He explained the reasons why the Trustees believed that the heritage assets owned by the Society and on display at the Jane Austen House Museum (other than the portrait of Edward Knight, displayed at Chawton House) should be transferred to the Museum's ownership. Although it was in the Trustees' power to do this, they wished for the approval of the membership, and a vote would be taken.

He noted that despite reminders, some members were still paying the old subscription rate, and urged them to update their mandates. There had been a good take-up for the conference to be held at Basingstoke on 26-29 September, but some places were still available.

He recorded with sadness the death of **Diana Shervington** the previous July, at the age of 99. She had served on the Society's committee for nearly 50 years and was then Vice-President for ten years. Maggie Lane's obituary in the Autumn 2018 Newsletter beautifully evoked her vivid and life-enhancing personality. He also noted with sadness the death of **Rex Collins**, aged 92, the devoted and supportive husband of Irene Collins, author and former Patron of the Northern Branch. It was said that you never got Irene without Rex.

His appeals for new people to put themselves forward for the committee had borne fruit. The number of new candidates and of those standing for re-election did not exceed the numbers allowed for the committee, and so there would not be a contested election. The officers remained himself as Chairman, Matthew Huntley as Treasurer and Maureen Stiller as Secretary. Re-elected members were Fiona Ainsworth, Sharron Bassett, Clare Graham, Mary Hogg, Marilyn Joice, Michael Kenning, Elizabeth Proudman and David Richardson. The four new members standing for election were; Emma Clery, Marion Davies, Fiona Riley and Heather Thomas. The outcome, he thought, was a happy one, a mixture of the old hands and enough new blood to keep Dracula happy at breakfast.

Two trustees had stepped down. Anthony Finney was known to many as the costumed parking director at our AGMs, and a reader at evensong. He was also well known for his talks and quizzes on his collection of Georgian artefacts both here and at JASNA events. He will continue as a traffic policeman. The other is Maggie Lane, editor of both the News Letter and the Annual Report. The high quality of these publications owed a very great deal to her editorial and persuasive skills. All members will also have admired the modernisation of the News Letter's appearance, including the introduction of colour.

The Chairman expressed his and the Society's gratitude to all the trustees. He expressed special thanks too to Brian Joice, who had been the society's excellent webmaster for almost twenty years. He also thanked James Freeman for providing, once more, the vintage coach service from Alton station in memory of his mother, Joan Freeman.

The educational outreach programme had included 11 talks to outside

organisations, ranging from Carlisle to Surrey and from Cambridgeshire to Cardiff. These included Women's Institutes, history groups, a Bookfest and a Heritage Week. Thanks were due to all speakers, especially to David Richardson, talks co-ordinator.

The Annual Study Day had been held in London on 9 February, the subject being *Reading Jane Austen*. As ever, Maureen Stiller had found a splendid set of speakers: Peter Sabor, Richard Cronin, Nicola Trott and Katie Halsey, the last of whom gave the Brian Southam Memorial Lecture. The Annual Conference would be in Basingstoke from the 26th to the 29th September. In 2020 two study days would be held, the usual event in London and a further day in Newcastle in May. This would be one of the events marking the Society's eightieth anniversary; others were being planned.

The Branches and Groups were once again active and inspirational and their annual meeting had been held on 23 February at the Jane Austen's House Museum. Representatives from 7 of the 10 Branches and Groups were able to attend and meet some of the trustees. The Chairman regretted that another commitment had kept him away.

The "Jane Austen 250 Fund" had raised enough money to buy an original set of illustrations by Christiana Hammond for an 1899 edition of *Sense and Sensibility* for display in Jane Austen's House Museum. Members had been able to read articles on this acquisition by Maggie Lane and David Richardson in the Spring News Letter.

In the wider world, a Norwegian airline had painted Jane Austen on a tail fin; so she was literally flying high. The Chairman had himself seen a free adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* on stage in Kansas City, mostly farcical but with moments which aimed at poignancy – an interesting experiment, but one which he felt had not come off. Meanwhile, the forthcoming television version of *Sanditon* was being widely publicized. One of the Society's trustees had been invited to Bristol to visit the set; she reported that the sets were admirably researched, but judgement on other aspects would have to await screening in October.

4. **The Treasurer** referred the meeting to the financial statements printed at the end of the Annual Report.

Looking first at **Income and Endowments**, the total for Annual Subscriptions had remained stubbornly the same despite herculean efforts by our membership secretary to chase up members who had not updated their standing orders. Sundry donations continued to reflect the success of the various programmes of talks organized by branches and groups, as well as donations to the 250 fund. Branch income and expenditure must be seen in tandem – both slightly down as one would expect after the fireworks of 2017's bicentennial events but nevertheless reflecting the hugely important role of branches and groups in our operation. And our investment income from the Charities Investment Fund continued solidly at just over £6k.

Turning to **Expenditure**, our costs had remained broadly in line with the

previous year though without the Bicentennial item. Grants to institutions included our first grant of £1,500 from the 250 Fund to the JAHM as mentioned in the preamble to the accounts. The increase in Trustee's expenses resulted from extra costs incurred in the setting up of the 250 Fund. And there had been a one-off expense for legal fees incurred in seeking resolution of questions raised by new charity rules over heritage assets. Note 7 of the Financial Statements explained the current position and this had been further explained by our Chairman.

The very bottom line revealed a modest operating surplus of £1,297, rather less than in the previous year, but nevertheless on the plus side. That was the good news.

The bad news could be seen in the overall balance sheet which showed a paper loss of £5,145 in the value of our **COIF investment** which at the end of 2018 stood at £181,023. This was unsurprising, reflecting political and economic uncertainties, and needed to be seen in the context of several years of investment growth. Fortunately, sooner or later financial markets always bounce back and the Treasurer was glad to report that the value of our investment at the end of June 2019 had already climbed back to £205,615 more than making up for the drop. As he had said in his last report, the trustees review the investment annually and remain confident in the COIF which specializes in providing an investment service for charities such as ours. In the continuing climate of political uncertainty, the important thing was that our investment continued to give a steady 3% yield on capital.

Mention had been made earlier to the continuing work being done on our **membership database**. At the end of 2018, our membership stood at 1337 – a number which includes 101 joint members, therefore giving a grand total of 1438 actual heads. Of these 557 were life members, 10 student members and 8 corporate members. During the year, we lost 44, almost all as a result of death, and in perfect symmetry, 44 new members had been added. Our membership secretary had had her work cut out contacting those still paying the old subscription rate and the number of short payers was reducing. At the same time the process of updating the list to delete non-payers continued.

In conclusion, the Treasurer mentioned **gift aid**: the Society remained of course hugely grateful to those who tick the gift aid box on our subscription form which enabled the Society to collect the gift aid refund arising. It was essential that members let us know if they cease being income tax payers when they retire, because in our claim the Society must sign a declaration to the HMRC that all subscriptions (and donations) have come from taxed income. Members were therefore reminded that in this event they should make sure to inform the Hon Secretary at the HQ address or the Membership Secretary straightaway.

The members approved the Trustees' decision on the Society's heritage assets.

Branches and Groups

Reports for 2019

Bath and Bristol Group

Members: Open membership *Subscription:* None *Cost of events:* £10 for talk and tea with sandwiches.

Last year we decided to link up with the The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution and are in the process of setting up a special Jane Austen programme with them. Their headquarters has been the venue for our talks for some years. It's a beautiful building and the room we use, complete with ceiling paintings, is gracious enough for Jane Austen herself. We have always made our talks social events so tea comes afterwards, with sandwiches and cake.

We started 2019 with an excellent illustrated talk by Penelope Byrde, one of our committee members. As Penny was the curator at the Costume Museum for many years before it changed its name to the Fashion Museum, we were listening to an expert. There were around 50 people present.

Having done two years with a coach trip to Chawton as our summer event, this year we took a guided walk around Sydney Gardens led by one of the Friends of the gardens. There are still many features of the old gardens remaining about which we none of us knew anything, despite all being Bath residents. We were lucky with the weather, so it was a pleasant meander around the gardens which Jane Austen knew as Sydney Gardens Vauxhall and which she used extensively.

In November we had our usual discussion afternoon, this time on 'The Women and their Lives in *Sense and Sensibility*'. The venue as usual was the home of Michael and Anne Davies. It was followed by tea and more chat. These friendly and informal afternoons are always most enjoyable and the log fire is a real bonus.

Diana White

Cambridge Group

Membership: 33 *Subscription:* £12 individual £15 family. No charge for meetings but £4 for guests. *Newsletter:* 1 per year

We are a comparatively small group and our membership has remained the same as last year, but we hope that numbers will grow over time. Our new venue is more centrally located, which might well increase interest in our group. We hold five meetings a year, three in the evening at an indoor venue, one as an outdoor strawberry tea event during the afternoon. Our highlight event at the end of the year to celebrate Jane's birthday, is a lunch in Queens' College Cambridge. Evening events feature a talk, a discussion or an audio-visual presentation and we finish with tea, coffee and biscuits or cake, which is always acceptable. Our members always enjoy time to socialise and get to know one another better. This also offers the opportunity of talking to our speakers on a slightly less formal basis than during a specific question time.

We had decided that from this year of 2019 going forward we would choose one of Jane's books or works as the main theme for our meetings. For 2019 we chose *Pride and Prejudice*. The first meeting in February was held at Coleridge Community College in central Cambridge. It was a lively discussion encouraging participation from all present on the main theme of the book, the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, entitled 'Darcy and Elizabeth – a fine romance?'

Our second evening meeting was in May when a talk was given by Jacqueline Reiter entitled 'I like a redcoat myself: Mr Wickham's militia'. Jacqueline's talk was an in-depth look at the type of military men there were at the time, and those featured in *Pride and Prejudice*. Those attending had time at the end, and indeed over tea afterwards, to question Jacqueline about matters to do with the various conflicts involving both the army and the navy of the day.

Once again, we chose the Plough at Fen Ditton for our Strawberry Tea in July. The committee provided a little light entertainment, and the afternoon was enjoyed in a relaxed manner. This year, Ian Hill came up with a delightful, brief foray into Jane's writing and what she might have thought about poetry, with illustrative quotes from *Pride and Prejudice*.

The October event was entitled 'The Body In The Library: meet the real Mr Bennet', a talk by David Richardson of the Jane Austen Society. Mr Bennet's rather dry quips were in evidence and some discussion of the other characters in the book formed the winding trail we took to the Library.

In keeping with tradition, our year concluded with the Birthday Lunch, held at Queens' College Cambridge on Saturday 14th December. The venue is spectacular and we are treated as honoured guests and very well looked after. We had been planning to have a musical event, but our guest performer, Sophie Andrews, was unable to join us. At the last minute, therefore I and Ian Hill prepared a presentation on music from *Pride and Prejudice* and from the time of Jane Austen, featuring musical excerpts, slides with quotes from the novel, screen clips of the BBC 1995 production, as well as a short video on Regency dancing, kindly provided by permission of Grant Notley, from whose website it was extracted. Members were able to take home with them our annual newsletter, filled with articles and information gathered and ably produced by the other joint secretary of this group, Hazel Mills.

Vicki Smith

Hampshire Group

Members: 104 *Subscription:* £5 individual £8 per couple *Newsletters:* 2 p.a. *Publications:* 'Occasional Papers'

The 2019 season started in April with our Annual General Meeting. Our speaker was Dr Cheryl Butler who spoke about 'Jane Austen and Southampton Spa'. This was a fascinating talk from which we learnt a great deal about Southampton. After the meeting and Cheryl's talk, we indulged our members with tea and home made cakes (made by members of the committee).

In May, we welcomed Dr. Gillian Dooley, Honorary Senior Research Fellow from Flinders University, Australia who was visiting the UK. She gave us an illustrated presentation, 'Jane Austen and the music of the French Revolution'. She talked of Jane Austen's knowledge of French politics and culture and what she thought of the turbulent events taking place across the Channel during her teens and early twenties through the medium of her music collection. This was so interesting that we are planning on publishing an Occasional Paper, based on her talk. The afternoon concluded with a cream tea accompanied with much interesting discussion.

Unfortunately, the weather conspired against us in August when we were due to have a presentation on 'Jane Austen and her Thames Valley Connections' by Joy Pibworth, but due to the extreme weather conditions, we considered it prudent to cancel the meeting. The decision to cancel was questioned by some but as Hampshire is a large county and many of our members travel considerable distances to our meetings, we felt it was the right decision on that day.

In October we held our annual Discussion Event where we discussed *Sanditon* and possible endings. We focused on how we thought Jane Austen might have completed the novel had she lived. It was very appropriate and well timed, being just after Andrew Davis's adaptation on television and inevitably we discussed the TV series. The general consensus was not very favourable. The afternoon closed with refreshments and further discussion.

Our Birthday Lunch at Brasserie Blanc in Winchester was organised earlier in November this year to reduce the stress of parking during the time of the Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market. This proved very successful and we all enjoyed a really delicious meal.

As many of you will be aware, in 2019, Jane Austen's House was able to save a precious section of a letter written by Jane Austen in November 1814 to her niece Anna. It was written during the time she was living in the cottage in Chawton and joins twelve other Jane Austen letters held by Jane Austen's House. The Museum was able to raise the £35,000 negotiated purchase price by applying for funding and launching an appeal. The Hampshire Group were pleased to be able to make a considerable contribution towards the purchase of the letter.

Lesley Wilson

Kent Branch

£12, £18 per household (£1 less if receiving newsletters online). *Newsletters*: 3 p.a. *Periodical*: Austentations, 1 p.a.

The year began with our AGM in March, held at Hadlow Manor near Tonbridge. The afternoon lecture was given by Kent archivist Mark Ballard on 'The Austens of Sevenoaks'. These included old Francis Austen, who paid for Jane's Austen's father to attend Tonbridge School, his son Francis Motley Austen who lived at Kippington, and a bewildering line of Austens originally from Horsmonden all called John. Many of these lived at the Old House in Sevenoaks High Street. Old Francis also lived and had his legal practice at the Red House in the High Street,

where there is still a law firm today. The much disputed Rice portrait was owned by Francis's nephew, the owner of Kippington, Colonel Thomas Austen.

The Summer Event in June took place as always at the lovely Godmersham Park, thanks to the hospitality of our President Fiona Sunley. The morning speaker was our Patron Jennie Batchelor, Professor of Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Kent, about her project on *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1832). The first magazine for women and by women, it contained articles and stories, female biographies, an agony aunt, songs, and embroideries in a pull-out section. Jennie had discovered some of the original rare and beautiful embroidery patterns, and she showed us some of the fragile examples. She and her colleague Alison Larkin collaborated on a book, *Jane Austen Embroidery*, published in March 2020. Jennie quoted several scenes from the novels which indicated that Jane had almost certainly read the magazine. In the afternoon there was entertainment of a different sort, when Regency dandy and MP Sir Joseph Scott, played by John White of the Select Society, arrived at Godmersham to bemoan his run of bad luck in the year 1812. Members and guests brought picnics to enjoy in the lunch break, when they also had to contend with a fiendish quiz on *Sense and Sensibility* devised by Dianne Brick. It was a salutary lesson that this was won by one of our newest members.

In August eight members took part in the annual Jane Austen Kent Ramble, organised by Paul Morris, which this year was based at Eastwell Manor. The circular walk covered a leisurely four miles, taking in the ruined St Mary's Church, reputed burial place of Richard III's illegitimate son Richard Plantagenet, and returning along the picturesque North Downs Way, ending with tea at the Manor. Jane visited the Finch-Hattons at Eastwell Manor several times when staying at Godmersham: 'They were very civil to me, as they always are' (1805 to Cassandra). The walkers echoed her verdict: 'Our visit to Eastwell was very agreeable'.

The Annual Winter Lunch in November was again held in the elegant surroundings of Broome Park. Dr Claire Walsh delivered an excellent lecture, 'Jane Austen's Christmas', on Christmas in the Georgian period, using novels, letters, paintings and engravings to bring it to life. The Georgian Christmas was very different from the Victorian festivity, and the emphasis was on gentility, tradition and sociability. Dr Walsh showed how it made an ideal setting for scenes in the novels, including of course Mr Elton's unwelcome proposal to Emma in the carriage following dinner at the Westons on Christmas Eve.

The final event of 2019 was the celebration of Jane Austen's birthday in Tonbridge, the Annual Birthday Lecture, which was given by the Revd Canon Michael Kenning. 70 people attended in Tonbridge Parish Church to hear his address, 'Words and Music: their incorporation in the life and work of Jane Austen'. Michael accompanied his fascinating talk by performing music by Jane Austen's favourite composer Josef Haydn. The afternoon concluded with a wide selection of Vivian Branson's delicious cakes.

Our discussion group Novel Views met twice. In April we discussed *Sense*

and Sensibility, and in October we met to discuss possible endings to *Sanditon*. The conversation inevitably centred on the TV adaptation by Andrew Davies, which did not meet with our joint approval. We were pleased to welcome two new members to the group. It is such a treat to meet over a sandwich lunch and talk about our favourite author all afternoon.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Kent Branch, a Student Essay prize on any aspect of the life and works of Jane Austen was awarded. Jodie Macklin won the prize with an outstanding essay, 'Novelist of Home: Houses, Rank and Middle-Class Values in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion*'. We were grateful to Jennie Batchelor for promoting the Student Essay Prize to her students at the University of Kent. The prize was £250, free membership of the Branch for a year, and publication of the essay in *Austentations*.

Three issues of our full colour newsletter were produced with a new editor, Dianne Brick. The nineteenth issue of our Branch publication *Austentations* was edited by Paul Morris, and contained Jodie's winning essay and six other contributions from members of the Kent Branch. Vivian Branson's Twitter Account 'Jane Austen's Zest' (Jane Austen's Zest@JaneAustenKent) now has over 1500 followers. A daily quote from her early works or her letters as near as possible to the day's date is posted. The Branch also has a Facebook page. Vivian gave a well attended talk at Ightham Mote on Jane Austen's links with the county, a talk which resulted in two more households joining the Kent Branch.

We were saddened by the deaths of three of our members, Bridget Duckenfield, Angela Bates and Bessie Radcliffe, all of whom had joined the Branch in its earliest days and contributed so much to its success. They are much missed.

Jill Webster

The London Group Annual Report for 2019

Members: 112 *Subscription:* £10 Each talk is paid for individually at £7 for members and guests are welcome at £10 each. *Newsletters:* 2 per year.

We began in January 2019 in a state of panic, as our speaker was rushed into hospital two days before our meeting. Thankfully, David Richardson came to our rescue with an excellent talk on *Fathers of the Bride* and the importance of the part they play in the novels. His talk provoked lively discussion and much laughter.

In February, it was a joy to welcome back Michael Kenning and to hear him play and talk about the music Jane Austen loved and played herself – a real treat!

In April we held our all day AGM. We began the day with our meeting and that was followed by a talk on *The Good, the Bad and the Snooty* by Marion Davies, who is a trustee of the main Society. She provided a revealing look at some of the most striking and memorable female characters in the novels, challenged some of our misconceptions and supported her arguments with some well chosen readings. In the afternoon, we had *A Walk in the Park* courtesy of Janie Lightfoot, an internationally renowned textiles conservator and archivist. She illustrated her talk with dresses, shawls, shoes, hats and fabric samples, which made a stunning display and added to a fascinating talk.

Later in April we followed in the Gardiners' footsteps to spend four days in the Peak District, organised very ably by Sara Hebblethwaite, a Blue Badge guide and a committee member. We stayed in Buxton and toured the stunning countryside of the Peaks by mini bus, which was fortunate, because it rained much of the time, so our footsteps were somewhat soggy! This did not detract from our enjoyment at all. We spent a full day at Chatsworth, glorying in its beauties and admiring the surrounding estate. Next day we went to Lyme Park. As we approached, we saw the famous vista from the 1995 adaptation and of course heard the reading of Elizabeth's first impressions of Pemberley. We had hoped to visit Haddon Hall, but unfortunately it was closed due to a water emergency, so we went to Bakewell instead and drowned our sorrows, so to speak, in Bakewell tarts! Altogether a memorable trip.

In June Sara organised a day's outing to Godmersham Park, once owned by Jane's brother Edward and frequently visited by her. We then went to Chilham, with its medieval square, dominated by Chilham Castle. It rained all day, but didn't spoil our pleasure in seeing a house and area with which Jane Austen was so familiar.

Our last meeting of the year was in October with a full day of talks. We began with Rosalind Aczel MA and one of our members, who talked about Jane Austen and Walter Scott and the link between them. It was very well researched and a most interesting insight. She was followed by Professor Jennie Batchelor, who talked about *The Lady's Magazine* and Jane Austen's reading material. She gave us a fascinating view of what magazine ladies of the period most liked to read.

The Patricia Clarke Memorial lecture was given by Professor Kathryn Sutherland. She chose *Jane Austen and the Seaside*, but no one expected the proposition she placed before us, namely that in *Sanditon* Jane Austen was moving in a new direction. She suggested that landscape played a central part in the novel, very different from her previous work. It gave us much to think about.

Our year ended with our Birthday Lunch in December at the University Women's Club in Mayfair, a lovely venue with a delicious lunch. This was followed by a stimulating toast by Professor John Mullan, our Patron and an excellent talk by Dr Amy Frost, Senior Curator of the Bath Preservation Trust, on *Architecture in Jane Austen's Time*.

Thus ended a full and most enjoyable year.

Margaret Chittick

Northern Branch

Members: 169, *Subscription:* £5.00 per person, £8.00 for two people at one address *Publication: Impressions*, three times per annum, Facebook page has 369 likes, currently posts are being seen by around 3000+ people around the world. 2019's activities started in February with a talk from Alison O'Byrne of the University of York entitled 'Going Shopping in Jane Austen's Novels'. This examined the hows and whys of shopping, the opportunity for women to make autonomous choices and issues such as interaction with the opposite sex.

Our April Study Day, under guidance from our Patron, Dr. Bill Hutchings, was ‘Dress and the Gothic in *Northanger Abbey*’. This looked firstly at the use of the Bath scenes to examine how Austen describes clothing and what it says about social attitudes. The second element was Austen’s mockery of the gothic genre as seen through the eyes of Catherine Morland. A very interesting day with strong input from the attendees.

In July our summer outing took us to Cusworth Hall in South Yorkshire, a beautiful building now owned by Doncaster MBC. It is effectively now a museum and is free to visit. We had a wonderful guided tour of the house under the title ‘The Glorious Georgians’, looking at the history of the house followed by lunch and then a tour of the grounds.

An additional outing took us to Hovingham Hall, childhood home of the Duchess of Kent. Tucked into the Howardian Hills not far from Castle Howard this is a beautiful Palladian house surrounded by lovely grounds and gardens.

Our premier event in early September was ‘A new Pianoforte for Jane’, an afternoon of Regency music and readings from Austen’s works provided by Concert Royal. This York-based and internationally known ensemble played Georgian music – including some of Austen’s own – on original Regency and Georgian instruments.

Our final event was the AGM in November, when Professor Gillian Russell of the University of York gave the Irene Collins Memorial Lecture entitled ‘Jane Austen’s Fallen Women’. This looked at morals, marriage and law in Regency England, illustrated by references to Austen’s plots and characters.

Our book and goods stalls continue to be popular, making a useful income and providing a valuable socialising opportunity for members and guests. Every event we held in 2019 made a profit and our overall excess of income over expenditure was £838.

On behalf of the members and committee of the Northern Branch I’d like to wish the Society a happy 80th birthday.

Julia Taylor

Scottish Branch

Members: 66, 1 Branch Patron; *Institutions:* 1 *Subscription:* Individual £15, Couple £20, Institution £20

Newsletter: 2 p.a.; a programme card for the year ahead is sent to all members.

We had an excellent start to 2019 with Katie Halsey giving her talk entitled ‘Looking and Seeing in *Pride and Prejudice*’. We had been looking forward to hearing her for more than a year, having had to cancel our meeting in 2018 because of snow. She did not disappoint! She gave us a fresh way to read the novel, encouraging us to search for all the references to looking and seeing and to observe the way they enhance the plot. For example, read the chapter on the Netherfield ball and discover Elizabeth’s discomfort by following her eyes. At the AGM which followed the talk, it was announced that two founder members of the Scottish Branch had decided to retire from the committee. We would like

to thank Ann Bates and Brenda Hinshaw for the splendid work they have done over the past 15 years.

Our biennial Symposium on 'Austen Architecture' was held at the Garvock House Hotel on 23 March. We were fortunate to have three brilliant speakers. Dr Amy Frost greatly widened our understanding of the significance of the buildings mentioned in her talk 'Austen and the Architectural Imagination in *Northanger Abbey*'. She explained that *Northanger Abbey* is a balance between expectation and disappointment, fantasy and reality, fiction and fact. In the second talk entitled "'Dinner to be on the table, directly!'" Dining Room Dynamics in Jane Austen's Novels', Hazel Jones explained the importance of the dining room scenes in the novels and why they are favoured by TV and film makers. Our third speaker was Tom Kelly on 'Classical Orders and Gothic Horrors'. Tom took us on a whistle stop tour of stately homes in Scotland of the Georgian and Regency period, suggesting suitable locations for Pemberley and Longbourn in the next Scottish adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The Nora Bartlett Memorial Lecture was delivered by Richard Cronin in May. He gave a absorbing and well-researched talk on *Northanger Abbey* as Jane Austen's 'First Novel'. He beautifully explained by quoting from the text that this is the novel where Jane Austen works out what kind of novelist she is going to be.

For our Strawberry Tea in June we met at the Dunfermline Carnegie Library for a well-illustrated talk by Sharron Bassett entitled 'Jane Austen Goes to Carnegie's Library'. She gave a fascinating description of circulating libraries in Jane Austen's time and explained how Andrew Carnegie was so grateful that he had been allowed to use the personal library of Colonel James Anderson that he resolved to provide similar opportunities for others should wealth ever come his way. The afternoon ended with us all enjoying the delicious strawberries and scones provided.

On 10 August, Hilary Aitken gave a talk on 'Medical Men in Jane Austen' explaining the difference between the various categories of 'doctors' and their qualifications (or lack of) in Jane Austen's time. We could all name Mr Perry, but who knew that there were so many others mentioned in the novels? From medical men we turned to the clergy for our next talk. Maureen Kelly spoke at our October meeting on 'The Curate's Egg', giving us an insight into what the life of a curate was like in Jane Austen's time. She also made some interesting comparisons between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland at that time. The final meeting of the year was the Birthday Lunch held at the Garvock House Hotel in Dunfermline on 7 December. Seonaid Birse entertained us afterwards with a lovely musical interlude on the clarsach.

The 'Students of a Jane Austen Persuasion' from Glasgow University continue to thrive. They have had a year packed with activities, including a Tea Crawl, novel discussions and films. They have also created a position of Social Ambassador on the committee to allow for greater involvement by students who are at university for only one year.

I would like to end this report by thanking our chairman for the past 14 years,

Maureen Kelly, for her brilliant leadership and for all the hard work she and Tom have put into the successful running of our Branch. They are both well-loved speakers around the world and we have been privileged to have them at the helm. Maureen has decided that it is time for her to retire from the committee and concentrate on other interests. We wish Maureen and Tom everything of the very best for the future and are glad that they will be remaining part of the Scottish Branch.

Marlene Lloyd-Evans

South West Branch

Members: 75 Subscription: £10 Events: members £20 non members £24 Newsletter: Pleasant Intelligence two per annum distributed at meetings or emailed.

Our friend and member Penelope Byrde began our year with 'Dress and Social Life in Jane Austen's Bath'. The interest it aroused led to one of the most lengthy post-talk questionings we have ever enjoyed. The title of our second talk was 'Mrs Goddard's Profession – Jane Austen, Schoolteachers and the Reading Ladies' Boarding School'. Mark Burgess has conducted an amazing amount of research into the lives and careers of many teachers connected with what was known as Reading Ladies' Boarding School, resulting in a forensic examination detailed enough to satisfy the most rigorous Austen scholars among us.

The spring meeting had a wonderful contrast in flavours. In 'Seaside Follies: An Excursion to Sanditon', Michael Biddiss and Louise Dilloway explored the marketing and exploitation of seaside locations and the residual attraction exerted by such resorts over the valetudinarian and the hypochondriac. Dramatic excerpts were used to great effect to portray the antics of the opportunist Lady Denham, Sir Edward's confusion of Life and Art, and the endless demands of Mr Parker's family with their need for constant medical attention, coupled with the urgent need for strong chocolate and buttered toast. In the afternoon session we had the dashing Clio O'Sullivan to enthral us in her gorgeous period costume. Her subject 'Jane Austen and Scandal' brought before us the well loved tales of gossip and the misdemeanours recounted in Jane Austen's letters and enacted in her novels. We were sent on our way shaking our heads, wagging our fingers and laughing at the same time.

In May, like all good literary pilgrims, we set off to explore Jane Austen's Kent – the ragstone and weather boarding, the oast houses and sheer beauty of Godmersham and Goodnestone. Many thanks are due to members of the Kent Branch. At Tonbridge, Vivian Branson gave us a guided tour; Clare Graham enriched our visit to Horsmonden Church and visited us at Hever Hotel as an evening speaker. On our way home via Box Hill, Sue Moris told us the history of Great Bookham Church. Hazel Jones even managed to fit in Maidstone Records Office and Sissinghurst on a great trip.

Our summer meeting featured three speakers, when we discovered that a Canadian author and an American author and academic would be in the South West at the same time. The first, Sheila Johnson Kindred, enthralled us with

her compelling account of ‘Fanny Palmer, Jane Austen’s Transatlantic Sister’. If we ever needed witness to the nature of women’s lives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries here was evidence aplenty. The intense discomfort of life and the struggle with continual fecundity was set against the background of the uncertainty of a naval career. We will certainly re-read *Persuasion* with a greater appreciation and understanding. Janine Barchas’s search for ‘Plain Janes and Other Cheap Editions’ laid a thrilling trail which proved how an increase in literacy led to a fervent quest for self-improvement through reading. Publishers employed all manner of bindings to attract purchasers, from the ornate gilded peacock feather binding to lurid cover illustrations of square-jawed heroes and, as the fifties and sixties progressed, bouffant hairstyles rather than curls created by tongs. Quite a few of us harbour affectionate memories of our first copies of Austen, often noted for inexpensive paper and a tendency to fall apart, requiring a rubber band to rescue page 250. Our third speaker Richard Jenkyns fascinated us with his talk on ‘Jane Austen and Music’. It is obvious that she was not merely the true proficient that Lady Catherine De Bourgh would have been had she learnt, but also possibly something of an original composer. Richard argued that a small but telling ink drawing in the margin of sheet music is in fact a self-portrait of Jane herself. The lovely airs and tunes from different parts of the British Isles so carefully and painstakingly copied by hand in so many cases, speak of a genuine interest in not only classical but also contemporary music of her time.

In the autumn Tom and Maureen Kelly made a welcome return to see us all the way from Edinburgh. Their talks on ‘The Heroic Capacity for Love’ and ‘Jane Austen and Curates: The Good, the Bad and the So-So’ entertained us with well-loved characters from the novels and sent us away from the last formal gathering of the year determined to re-read every word of our favourite author.

On December 16th the Rougemont Hotel, Exeter hosted a Birthday Tea, complete with a special M&S ‘Happy Birthday Jane Austen’ cake. The entertainment was provided by accomplished actress Hannah Lee who presented ‘Jane Austen At Home’, a lively and varied recital with engaging drawing-room intimacy, celebrating the life, letters and novels of one of our greatest writers. It was devised and directed by Stephen Siddall of Cambridge.

Penelope Townsend

Southern Circle

Members: 21 Subscription: £5 Newsletter: 2 single sheets p.a.

The Southern Circle is a friendly and informal group where the emphasis is on talking about Jane Austen’s works and aspects of her life. The group held its usual two meetings during 2019 and as usual got together at the AGM. The spring meeting once again took place in March – no snow this year unlike 2018! Rather than our normal discussion topic, member Joy Pibworth gave us a delightful talk on ‘Jane Austen and Tea’, complete with authentic cakes and an accompanying quiz which challenged our collective knowledge of the books. Our October meeting was held at Manor House School, Bookham, Surrey, where we discussed

how Jane Austen's characters would adapt to life in the 21st century.

We are very keen to welcome new members to the group. Our future meetings are likely to take place at Chawton (if we can book the Learning Centre of course) rather than splitting between Chawton and Bookham. A warm welcome awaits anyone thinking of trying the group out so please get in touch (my contact details can be found in the News Letter diary pages).

Fiona Ainsworth

Mary Pearson: a Life and a Portrait

Sophie Reynolds

In March 2020, Jane Austen's House acquired a portrait miniature of Miss Mary Pearson, painted by William Wood in 1798. It shows a pleasant-faced young woman of twenty-four years old, with large brown eyes and dark hair, wearing a white muslin dress.

Mary was born on 31 March 1774 in Dover, the daughter of the distinguished naval officer Sir Richard Pearson (1731-1806) and his wife Margaret (née Harrison, 1743-1816), both of Appleby, Westmorland (now Cumbria). Richard and Margaret had twelve children, of whom Mary was the third child and the oldest girl. Six of Mary's siblings are listed as dying young¹ which may explain why some accounts list Sir Richard's children as four sons and two daughters only. Of those who lived to adulthood, Mary's brothers were all in active service or employed overseas. Her eldest brother, Richard (1769-1838), became a Vice-Admiral in the Royal Navy. (He married Miss Maria Holmes and had one daughter; one of his descendants is the Jane Austen Society's President, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles.) Her brother Henry (1776-1840) served as Governor of Penang in 1808, while John (1781-1814) died 'suddenly from the bite of a cobra copella',² when working as a judge on the Malabar Coast. Jackson (1787-1807), Mary's youngest brother, died a prisoner in France. Mary's only surviving sister was Hannah Frances (born 1779); she married Rawson Boddam Crozier, Esq., a Captain in the Engineers, and had six sons and one daughter.

While the history books give us only the merest glimpse of Mary's life, they are full of information about her father, who had an active and successful naval career and distinguished himself at the Battle of Flamborough Head in 1779. Sir Richard entered the Navy in 1745, aged fourteen. He served in the East India Company for five years but returned to the Navy and rose through the ranks to be made Captain in 1773. In 1779 he undertook the command of HMS *Serapis*, a naval warship employed that autumn as an escort for a large convoy of merchant ships returning from trading in the Baltic. On 23 September they passed near Flamborough Head, off the coast of Yorkshire, where they were attacked by a Franco-American squadron led by American Continental Navy officer John Paul Jones.

The ensuing battle was short but bloody. The *Serapis* held its ground long enough for the convoy to achieve safety at Scarborough, but it was eventually overpowered and Captain Pearson surrendered. The battle became one of the most celebrated naval actions of the American War of Independence, despite its relatively small size and the considerable dispute over what had actually occurred.

Captain Pearson was captured, but on his release in 1780 he was honourably acquitted by Court Martial for the loss of the *Serapis* and received a knighthood, as well as gifts from the city of Hull and the merchants he had helped to protect. In 1790 he retired from active service and was appointed a Captain of Greenwich

Hospital, before succeeding to the position of Lieutenant-Governor of the Hospital in 1800.

Mary enters our story in 1796 when she became engaged to be married to Henry Austen, who was serving in the Oxford Militia. It is likely that Jane Austen met her at Rowling in Kent, where her brother Edward was living with his young family, during the late summer of 1796.³ Jane's references to Henry's fiancée in letters to Cassandra between 1796 and 1807 fill in some aspects of Mary's life that would otherwise be unknown to us.

The first reference comes on Tuesday 23 August 1796, when Jane wrote from London on her way to Kent: 'Edward has heard from Henry this morning. He has not been at the Races, at all, unless his driving Miss Pearson over to Rowling one day can be so called'. It is a little quip, quite in Jane's style, and sets us up to meet a girl who is later to be described as a flirt. In September, Mary crops up again. It seems that she was slow to reply to Jane's letters. On Thursday 1 September 1796 Jane wrote, 'I have no idea that Miss Pearson will return with me'. The plan seems to have been that Jane and her brother Francis would travel via Greenwich to collect Mary and take her onward to Steventon,⁴ but Mary had not responded to the invitation. This made life difficult for Jane, who wanted to finalise her plans for getting home.

The uncertainty persisted. On Friday 16 September Jane told Cassandra that she had written again to Mary about their travel plans, and on the following Sunday that she had requested an answer from Mary 'by return of post'. She went on to make a personal comment on Mary's appearance, warning her family that they would not find her as attractive as they hoped. She writes: 'If Miss Pearson should return with me, pray be careful not to expect too much Beauty. I will not pretend to say that on a first veiw she quite answered the opinion I had formed of her.—My Mother I am sure will be disappointed, if she does not take great care. From what I remember of her picture, it is no great resemblance.'

Deirdre Le Faye has noted that the portrait in question was a miniature, which Henry had obtained and shown 'proudly to his parents, and Mrs Austen was pleased to think that Miss Pearson was a very pretty girl'.⁵ If so, it was not the portrait now acquired by the Museum, which was painted two years later in 1798. Portrait miniatures were, however, quite the rage at that time. Small, portable and private, they were popular Regency fashion items and often exchanged by engaged couples.

We do not know whether Mary visited Steventon that year. If she did, Deirdre Le Faye speculates that 'her introduction to the Austen family cannot have proved successful'⁶ for within a few weeks the engagement was broken off. Henry went to London where he saw his cousin Eliza de Feuillide, who wrote in turn to her cousin Phylly Walter:

Our Cousin Henry Austen has been in Town he looks thin & ill – I hear his late intended is a most intolerable Flirt, and reckoned to give herself great Airs – The person who mentioned this to me says She is a pretty wicked looking Girl with bright Black Eyes

which pierce thro & thro, No wonder the poor young Man's heart could not withstand them.⁷

It is not surprising that Eliza was critical of Mary. Henry was on the rebound, having proposed to Eliza in 1795 and although she had refused him, she was still interested. In December 1797 he proposed again, and this time Eliza accepted. She wrote to her godfather Warren Hastings on 28 December 1797, explaining Henry's advantages and stating that he had at last 'induced me to an acquiescence which I have withheld for more than two years'.⁸ They were married on the last day of the year, by special licence.

Claire Tomalin writes of Henry and Eliza that 'both were worldly enough to understand a bargain, sexual and financial, but it looks as though there was a genuine flame burning; one that had flickered, burnt up, been extinguished and revived itself several times over many years'.⁹ Mary, one suspects, never had a chance.

Two years later, in 1799, Jane was responsible for returning a 'packet' to Mary. This may have been a bundle of letters that Mary had written to Henry during their engagement (perhaps she was a better correspondent to her betrothed than she was to his sister!), but it may have also contained the portrait that Jane had thought so flattering. She wrote to Cassandra on Wednesday 19 June 1799:

the Post has been more friendly to me, it has brought me a letter from Miss Pearson. You may remember that I wrote to her above two months ago about the parcel under my care, & as I had heard nothing from her since, I thought myself obliged to write again two or three days ago, for after all that had passed I was determined that the Correspondence should never cease thro' my Means—. This second Letter has produced an apology for her silence, founded on the Illness of several of the family.—The exchange of packets is to take place through the medium of M^r Nutt, probably one of the Sons belonging to Woolwich Academy, who comes to Overton in the beginning of July.—I am tempted to suspect from some parts of her Letter, that she has a matrimonial project in view—I shall question her about it when I answer her Letter.

Jane's reference to 'all that had passed', surely refers to the way in which Mary and Henry's engagement had ended. Jon Spence points out that the fact that Mary and Henry's letters to each other were not returned until long afterwards 'suggests that the ending of the engagement was a hurried and somewhat confused affair' in which Henry 'had somehow managed to extricate himself from his engagement'.¹⁰ Deirdre Le Faye notes that 'HTA's broken engagement to Miss Mary Pearson seems to have left resentment on her side'.¹¹

In her letter of June 1799 Jane refers to a 'matrimonial project' which Mary may have in view. This may be an allusion to Mary's reputation as an intolerable flirt (if indeed such a reputation existed); but it could also suggest that Jane was intimate enough with Mary to quiz her about a supposed love interest – or perhaps Jane was herself joking to Cassandra, and had no intention of quizzing Mary at all. If Mary did have such a 'marriage project' in mind, it did not come to fruition, for

she was not married until 1815. There is, however, the portrait miniature (newly acquired by Jane Austen's House) to account for. This was painted in May 1798, as William Wood's fee book helpfully attests.¹² From his fee book too we know that he charged £10 for the portrait, and that he had painted Mary's younger sister Hannah the month before.

We do not know why the portrait was commissioned, but it was common for a miniature to be painted on the occasion of a betrothal, so it is possible that Mary did have another suitor around this time. The rules were fluid, however. A miniature could be presented as a precursor to an engagement. Perhaps Mary had a suitor who wished to take her picture home to his family, as Henry had done. There may, of course, have been no suitor in the picture. Mary's sister Hannah was married around this time, so perhaps her portrait was commissioned and as the older sister Mary simply did not want to be left out. A portrait miniature was a fashionable thing to have, after all, and she was a young, pretty girl.



*A Perspective View of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich,
by Benjamin Cole (1697 – 1783). Courtesy of rareoldbooks.com*

In January 1801 Jane evidently heard of Sir Richard's promotion to Lieutenant-Governor of Greenwich Hospital, for she wrote to Cassandra on 3 January, 'I am very glad to hear of the Pearsons' good fortune—It is a piece of promotion I know they looked forward to as very desirable some years ago, on Capt: Lockyer's

illness. It brings them a considerable increase of Income, & a better house'. She clearly knew enough about the Pearsons' situation, and their wishes, and she sounds genuine in her pleasure at their 'good fortune'. Were they perhaps friends, then, of a sort?

By 1807, they were clearly not. We know this because on Sunday 8 February 1807, Jane wrote to Cassandra from Southampton with 'a story'. It referred to the Pearsons who were also living in Southampton, after the death of Sir Richard in 1806. The story was that a house guest of the Austens had been called on by a guest of the Pearsons. Jane wrote: 'upon putting everything together we have scarcely a doubt of her being actually staying with the only Family in the place whom we cannot visit.—What a Contretemps!' She went on: 'Miss F. has never called again, but we are in daily expectation of it.—Miss P. has of course given her a proper understanding of the Business'.

Mary, this may suggest, was still resentful of the way in which the engagement had ended. But we must assume she got over it, for she did marry at last, and indeed she did so twice. In December 1815, she was married to Richard Higginson,¹³ a captain in the Royal Marines.¹⁴ They were married in Bath, where perhaps they had met. She was evidently widowed; for in 1837 she married again, this time to the Reverend Richard Mason, of Petersfield. She died on 21 August 1841, near Lymington. She had no children, although like Jane Austen she had plenty of nephews and nieces.

Mary's portrait of 1798 survives, having stayed in the family until it was sold at auction in 2019 to the art dealer Philip Mould & Company. The painting was purchased on the strength of the artist, William Wood; it was only later, when researching the sitter, that Philip Mould's consultant Emma Rutherford discovered the connection between Mary and Henry Austen which attracted the Museum's attention.

At the time of the purchase, the miniature was set in a frame within a frame – the original gold frame from the 1790s enclosed within a later lacquered and gilded frame to allow it to be hung on the wall. Some components of the original gold frame, such as the glass on the reverse, had been removed to enable it to sit snugly in this later frame. A conservator was employed to clean and reframe the miniature in a slim gold frame, remanufactured from the original 18th century gold. This returned the frame to the style of the 1790s, when miniatures were generally intended to be worn on the body or held as an intimate keepsake rather than displayed on a wall. Mary's woven hair was carefully lifted from the back of the original frame and reset on the reverse of the new one.

The revived portrait was acquired in March 2020 by Jane Austen's House, with funding from the Art Fund and the Beecroft Bequest. It can be seen at the Museum when it re-opens, celebrating not only one of the many faces in Jane Austen's catalogue of acquaintance, but also an appealing young woman in her own right, smiling enigmatically out at us from 200 years ago.

With thanks to Emma Rutherford and Professor Kathryn Sutherland.



*Reverse of William Wood's miniature portrait of Mary Pearson (1798).
Reproduced courtesy of Jane Austen's House.*

Notes

1. Burke, John Bernard (ed.; 1848). *The Patrician*, vol. VI, p.407. London: E. Churton.
2. *Ibid*, p.407.
3. Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen's Letters* (2011). Note to Letter 4, p.370. Oxford University Press.
4. Le Faye, Deirdre, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family* (2006), p.188. Cambridge University Press
5. Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (2004), p.95. Cambridge University Press
6. *Ibid*. p.98.
7. Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen's Outlandish Cousin* (2002), p.129. British Library.
8. *Ibid*. Eliza de Feuillide to Warren Hastings, 28 Dec 1797, p.151.
9. Tomalin, Claire, *Jane Austen A Life* (1997), p.127-8. Viking.
10. Spence, Jon; *Becoming Jane Austen* (2007), p.107. Continuum.
11. Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen's Letters* (2011). Note to Letter 50, p.398.
12. The portrait is listed in the artist's fee book as no.5575. Wood's fee book is held at the National Art Library at the V&A.
13. Urban, Sylvanus, *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle. Volume LXXXV. Part 2* (1815), p.630.
14. G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, *A List of the Officers of the Army and of the Corps of Royal Marines* (1821), p.356. War Office.

*‘In remembrance of the Library’:
The Dispersal and Retrieval of the Books
at Godmersham Park*

Peter Sabor

On 12 October 1875, Jane Austen’s nephew Edward Knight (1794-1879), then aged 81, wrote to his old friend Walter Field, Vicar of Godmersham Church. The letter, sent from Chawton House, acknowledges the receipt of Field’s copy of John Lewis’s *History of Tenet* (1723), ‘which I accept with pleasure’. In exchange, he had sent Field his own copy of William Lambarde’s topographical dictionary, *An Alphabetical Description of the Chief Places in England and Wales* (1730), with a warm inscription on the flyleaf: ‘Walter Field from Edw^d. Knight. In remembrance of the Library at Godmersham Park. Oct^r. 7th. 1875’.¹

Edward Knight had inherited Godmersham Park in November 1852, on the death of his father, Edward Austen Knight. Much is known about the library that then became his, thanks to a two-volume catalogue compiled for his father in 1818.² These volumes, one organized by shelf location and the other alphabetically by author, provide the titles of some 1,220 books, many in multi-volume sets. Approximately 200 of these are in Latin, Greek, or Italian, with a further 150 or so in French and a few more in Spanish, Italian and German. A number of the works published on the Continent were probably among those bought by Edward Austen (as he then was) on his Grand Tour; his travel journals record his sending a box of books from Hamburg to Godmersham in 1789 and a second box from Leghorn a year later.³ Some fifty of the titles were added to the catalogue after 1818, with a few inserted as late as the 1850s.

Jane Austen’s use of this library during her many visits to Godmersham Park between 1802 and 1811 has been well documented.⁴ Less well known are the comments on various books in the collection made by her nephew Charles Bridges Knight (1803-1867), one of Edward Knight’s younger brothers. From 1832 onwards, while he was still living at Godmersham, he kept a series of diaries recording his activities and his daily reading – and these diaries, still unpublished, are extant at Jane Austen’s House, Chawton. Although his primary interest was in shooting and fishing, he also immersed himself in Godmersham’s books, primarily theological and philosophical, until in 1837 he left the house to take up the newly vacant living at Chawton.⁵

Unlike his brother Charles, Edward Knight seems to have made little use of this splendid collection. After his father’s death, he continued to reside with his family at Chawton House, where he had taken up residence with his first wife, Mary Dorothea Knatchbull, in 1826. After undertaking extensive and expensive renovations to Godmersham Park in 1853, he leased it to Carnegie Jervis before eventually, in 1874, selling the estate and the house (for £225,000) to John Cunliffe Lister Kaye, the wealthy son of a Yorkshire manufacturer.⁶ The sale

caused much distress in the Knight family. Although Edward moved many of the books from Godmersham Park to Chawton House, probably soon after the sale of 1874, he also seems to have disposed of a substantial number at an auction in Canterbury, at which furniture and paintings were also sold off.⁷ His younger sister Elizabeth Rice complained bitterly, in letters to her daughter of July 1874, about the ‘dreadful sale’, which was a ‘very wrong and totally unjustifiable thing’. Edward was ‘too dreadful to think of—not care for the pictures and books’.⁸ And as his letter to Edward Field reveals, he was also ready to exchange a book in his collection for one that he found of greater interest. Lambarde’s dictionary was presented ‘in remembrance of the Library at Godmersham Park’, but its former owner displayed little desire to keep that library intact. Pursuing foxes, rather than preserving books, was his passion, as his obituary of November 1879 in the *Hampshire Chronicle* noted: ‘An intelligent and keen sportsman and an unrivalled horseman, he will long be remembered by those who had the pleasure of following him when he hunted with the celebrated H.H. Hounds’.⁹

Fortunately for the wellbeing of the collection, the next owner of Chawton House, Edward Knight’s son Montagu George Knight (1844–1914), was a bibliophile who bought many books of his own, as well as preserving those he had inherited. He was also an author himself. In 1879, the year in which he inherited, he published a catalogue of the Chawton House paintings, *Pictures at Chawton*,¹⁰ and in 1911, together with his cousin William Austen Leigh, he co-authored *Chawton Manor and Its Owners*. For the library he had hand-made shelf tickets attached to the books, indicating their positions on the shelves. In 1900, he also began affixing one of his three bookplates to many of the volumes, thus helping us to identify them today.¹¹ Montagu Knight’s enthusiasm for bookplates is a boon to us; since they are much more frequently present than earlier Knight bookplates, they are often the clinching factor in determining whether an extant book was formerly on the Godmersham Park library shelves. Also thanks to Montagu Knight, a typewritten catalogue of the library was compiled in 1908.¹² The titles given to the books here are rudimentary in the extreme – ‘Essays Prize’, ‘Walpole’s Pictures’, etc. – but the accompanying information about author, place and date of publication, and format usually makes identification of the book in question possible. Some eight hundred of the books in the 1818 Godmersham Park catalogue are also listed in its counterpart of 1908, indicating that about a third of the holdings had been dispersed in the past ninety years – with the bulk of the losses almost certainly taking place during the twenty-seven year stewardship of Edward Knight, from 1852 to 1879.

After Montagu Knight died childless in 1914, Chawton House and its library was inherited first by his nephew Lionel Knight (1872–1931) and then by Lionel’s son Edward (1910–1987) – whose passions were cricket and hunting and who figures prominently as “Bapops” in his granddaughter Caroline Knight’s memoir *Jane & Me*.¹³ During the over seventy years of Lionel’s and Edward’s respective ownership of Chawton House, more than three hundred books were sold or given away. In July 1935, a year after he married his first wife, Edward sold over fifty

123	Name of Book	Author	Where printed	Date	Cms	Shelf	Tols	No	Price
	Life of Illustrious Men	Corn. & Deane	London	1685	1	2	1	8	0
	Life of Gracostia Bishop of Lisbon	Wagge Samuel	London	1792	2	2	1	19	0
	Life of Cicero	Hicclen Turgers	London	1741	1	2	2	6-7	0
	Life of Johnson	Donnell	London	1781	1	2	2	2	0
	Life of Henry II	Epistola Lord	London	1497	2	2	4	1-4	0
	Life of Anne Lee		London	1800	1	4	1	2	0
	Life of Lincoln Turgewine		London	1796	1	8	2	20-19	0
	Life of Swift	Curry Lord	London	1758	1	9	1	24	0
	Life of Bernese		London	1765	1	6	1	1	0
	Life of XIV Siecle de	Voltaire	London	1770	1	8	4	12-12	0
	Life of Minne Lee	Voltaire	London	1793	1	8	1	23	0
	Life of God The	Boyle	London	1688	1	8	1	21	12p
	Life of Elements of	Duncan	London	1792	1	11	1	23	12p
	Life of Survey of		London	1747	1	1	1	16	0
	Life of Trial	Lock	London	1763	1	2	1	6	0
	Life of the Epistola		London	1781	1	8	8	20-20	0
	Life of its environs		London	1747	1	8	1	25	0
	Life of Proteus 1641-1647		London	1791	1	8	1	25	0
	Life of Travels	Long J	London	1847	1	8	1	18	0
	Life of XIV	Parsons	London	1793	1	8	1	20-22	0
	Life of the	Brach	London	1793	1	8	1	21-24	0
	Life of Portraits	Lodge E	London	1822	1	8	12	12-28	0

1908 catalogue, pages 123-124 – Chawton House. Knight Collection.

titles at a Sotheby's auction, most of which had been in the 1818 catalogue, and he continued to dispose of other books formerly at Godmersham Park over the next fifty years. As Caroline Knight remarks, the library was Edward Knight's favourite room at Chawton House, but he used it mainly for watching television. She never saw him or his second wife 'look at any of the books in the library. It was as if the spines of the books were merely decorative wallpaper'.¹⁴

On the death of Edward Knight in 1987, Chawton House was inherited by his eldest son Richard (b. 1940). The building, however, was in a state of such decay that the new owner did not take possession. Instead, he began negotiations with investors who could ensure the future of the house and the estate, which concluded in 1992, when Chawton House was acquired by the American entrepreneur Sandy Lerner on a 125-year lease. Ten years later, in 2003, she reopened it as Chawton House Library, a centre for the study of early women writers. The books that Richard Knight inherited, however, remained in his possession. While Chawton House was being extensively renovated, the thousands of volumes formerly at Godmersham Park, as well as those acquired by later generations of Knights, were stored in a barn. Happily, Richard Knight placed them on long-term loan at Chawton House shortly after its reopening, where they are now housed as the Knight Collection.¹⁵

Within the Knight Collection are about 520 of the books listed in the 1818 Godmersham Park catalogue, leaving about 700 more to be accounted for. The common enemies of books, including fire, floods, rodents, and human destroyers,

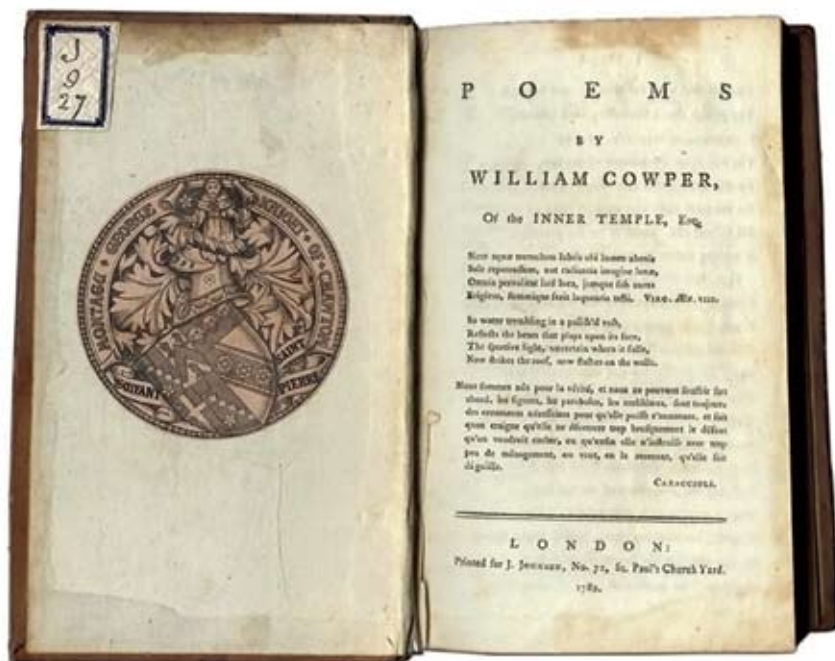
must have dispatched a considerable number of these missing items. If, however, only a third of the total has survived, which is perhaps a conservative estimate, some 230 books listed in the Godmersham Park Catalogue of 1818 should be extant, identifiable in most cases through either a Knight signature, a Knight bookplate, a Chawton House library shelf ticket, or some combination of these items. For several years, a group entitled 'GLOSS' (Godmersham Lost Sheep Society), led by Deborah Barnum, has been striving to locate these missing volumes and, when possible, return them to Chawton House, thus rejoining the collection from which they have been separated. To date, we have identified 59 of these books in the United Kingdom (32), the United States (23), Canada (3) and Australia (1), both in public collections and in private hands.¹⁶

Of the ex-Godmersham Park books not in the Knight Collection, pride of place goes to the six first editions of Austen's novels acquired by Jane Austen's House in 1983. Formerly owned by the American Austen collector Charles Beecher Hogan, who bequeathed them to the House, each volume bears the signature of Austen's nephew, 'Edward Knight, Godmersham Park'. In addition, *Sense and Sensibility* is inscribed 'Marianne Knight', while the other novels are signed 'Marianne Knight from Edw^d Knight Sept. 1858'.¹⁷ It seems then that Edward Knight gave the Godmersham Park set of Jane Austen first editions to his sister Marianne in September 1858, presumably as a birthday gift (she was born on 15 September 1801).¹⁸ She could have taken them with her to Donegal when she moved permanently to Ireland in 1884, although sadly by 1895, at the end of her long life, she 'had quite clearly forgotten that her aunt was the acclaimed novelist Jane Austen'.¹⁹

In addition to the Austen first editions, twenty-six ex-Godmersham books are scattered elsewhere in the United Kingdom. One has been acquired for the Godmersham Park Heritage Centre: Mary Hays's six volume *Female Biography*, bearing the signature of Elizabeth Austen, Edward Austen's wife, and the date 1805 (before they changed their surname to Knight). Ten books have been returned to Chawton House by members of GLOSS, including the copy of William Lambard's topographical dictionary with its letter from Edward Knight to Walter Field. Surprisingly, only a single Godmersham Park book has been found to date in British public collections: the British Library's copy of George Carr's *Sermons* (1796), inscribed 'Library. Godmersham Park'. Further finds will surely still be made at the British Library, the Bodleian, and other such major institutions.

Five of the remaining volumes so far located in Britain are owned by a Knight family member, and three others are also in private hands. One of these is of outstanding importance: the Godmersham Park copy of Cowper's *Poems* in two volumes (1782-85), which Austen would surely have consulted during her visits to her brother's seat; Cowper was, after all, 'her favourite moral writer ... in verse'.²⁰ Fortunately, the present owner has agreed to sell the volume to GLOSS, which is currently raising funds for its acquisition; it will then be returned to Chawton House.²¹ Another book in private hands is Hester Piozzi's *Observation and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and*

Germany (1789). Six more Godmersham Park books have appeared in recent auction sales and booksellers' catalogues in Britain, and although their current locations are, in most cases, unknown, they are almost certainly extant.²²



First edition of the Poems of William Cowper (1782). Abebooks and the Reading with Austen website. Image courtesy of Bernard Quaritch, Ltd.

In the United States, eleven libraries have acquired books formerly at Godmersham Park. The most active purchaser has been the Harry Ransom Center, Austin, Texas, with five titles, including *Travels in Kamtschatka* by Jean-Baptiste, Baron de Lesseps: its title might well have caught Austen's eye when she wrote about the heroine and her father's 'retreat into Kamschatka' in 'Plan of a Novel'.²³ Stanford University Library has three ex-Godmersham books; the Beinecke Library at Yale, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the National Gallery of Art Library, Washington, Smith College Library, Amherst College Library, the University of Virginia Library, the Getty Museum, and the Clark Library have one each. Two volumes (a Baskerville edition of Aesop's *Fables*, 1761, and William Mason's poem *The English Garden*, 1778), have been located in private hands, in both cases because the owners were personally known to me; there must surely be many other Godmersham Park titles owned by American collectors. In addition, four Godmersham Park books have been sold by American auction houses in the last two decades and are probably now in private hands.²⁴

Beyond the United Kingdom and the United States, only four ex-Godmersham books have been located to date. One of these is in Australia at the University of Melbourne Library; the other three are in Canada. *The Conduct of Admiral Vernon* (1741), at the University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Library, is among the most recent finds, identified through one of Montagu Knight's bookplates. Rare Books and Special Collections at my own university, McGill, owns *The American Gazetteer* (1762), which had previously been sold at the Sotheby's auction of July 1935. And just a few weeks ago, McGill acquired John Long's *Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader Describing the Manners and Customs of the North American Indians* (1791) from Arader Galleries, New York.



1818 Godmersham Park Library catalogue, East Case – Chawton House.
Knight Collection.

Locating the several hundred Godmersham Park books yet to be identified will be a lengthy and arduous project. There is, however, a more manageable one. As Deborah Barnum has recently noted in her 'Reading with Austen' blog, the 1818 Godmersham Library catalogue contains a total of at least 63 titles by 48 women authors: possibly more, since the authorship of some anonymous works is unknown.²⁵ Of these titles, 26 remain in the Knight Collection, the six Austens are at Jane Austen's House, Mary Hays is at Godmersham Park, and Hester Piozzi is in private hands; 29 titles thus remain to be found. To this number should be added three novels extant in the Knight Collection but only in incomplete sets: Frances Burney's final publication, *The Wanderer* (1814), lacking the first and fifth volumes of five; Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis's three-volume *Adèle et Théodore* (1782), lacking the first two volumes; and Catherine Parry's two-volume *Eden*

Vale (1784), lacking the first volume. Jane Austen was certainly familiar with the novels by de Genlis and Burney, as well as with many of the missing works, such as Hester Piozzi's two-volume edition of her correspondence with Samuel Johnson (1789).²⁶ Finding these books by Austen's female predecessors and contemporaries and, if possible, returning them to Chawton House to rejoin the other books from Godmersham Park housed there will take longer than the day well spent by the heroine of 'The beautifull Cassandra'—but it is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Notes

1. William Lambarde's dictionary, with his letter to Walter Field slipped inside, was recently acquired by Chawton House; see the Chawton House Facebook post of 26 September 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/ChawtonHouse>.
2. Recent studies of the Godmersham Park Library and its catalogue include Gillian Dow, 'Reading at Godmersham: Edward's Library and Marianne's Books', *Persuasions* 37 (2015), 156-62; Peter Sabor, 'Godmersham Park Library: Jane Austen's Paradise Regained', *Persuasions* 39 (2017), 31-44; and Alice Villaseñor, 'Edward Knight's Godmersham Library and Jane Austen's *Emma*', *Persuasions* 29 (2007), 79-88. The website *Reading with Austen* (www.readingwithausten.com), for which I am the Principal Investigator, lists all of the books in the 1818 catalogue, with photographs, when the book is extant, of its title page, inscriptions, bookplates, etc.
3. See Deirdre Le Faye, 'Edward Knight's Grand Tour', *The Jane Austen Society Report for 2016*, pp. 28-36.
4. See Gillian Dow and Katie Halsey, 'Jane Austen's Reading: The Chawton Years', *Persuasions On-Line* 30.2 (2010); Katie Halsey, *Jane Austen and her Readers, 1786-1945* (London: Anthem Press, 2012); Katie Halsey, 'From Samplers to Shakespeare: Jane Austen's Reading', in *The Routledge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Maria Frawley and Cheryl Wilson (London: Routledge, forthcoming); and Olivia Murphy, *Jane Austen the Reader: The Artist as Critic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013).
5. See Hazel Jones, *The Other Knight Boys: Jane Austen's Dispossessed Nephews* (Crediton: Uppercross Press, 2020), pp. 99-121. For Charles Knight's diary entries about his reading at Godmersham, see the *Reading with Austen Blog* by Deborah Barnum: <https://readingwithaustenblog.com/2019/09/05/reading-in-the-godmersham-library-jane-austens-nephew-charles-bridges-knight-part-iv>.
6. See Nigel Nicolson, *Godmersham Park Kent* (Alton: Jane Austen Society, 1996), pp. 27-28.
7. See Jones, *The Other Knight Boys*, p. 41.
8. Showing as much concern for social appearances and racial purity as for the fate of the books, Elizabeth continues: 'I quite dread to hear who has bought it, don't say this, but if it should be a Jew or a man of low birth and bad character the disgrace will be complete indeed' (M.C. Hammond, *Relating to*

Jane: Studies on the Life and Novels of Jane Austen with a Life of her Niece Elizabeth Austen Knight (London: Minerva Press, 1998), p. 426).

9. Cited in William Austen Leigh and Montagu George Knight, *Chawton Manor and its Owners: A Family History* (London: Smith, Elder, 1911), p. 174.
10. See Emma Yandle, 'Chawton House News', 1 April 2020, on the Chawton House website: <https://chawtonhouse.org/2020/04/curator-chawton-house-collection>. Yandle notes that with a 'curator's desire to systematise and preserve information about his family's collection', Montagu Knight affixed descriptive labels to the back of each painting. A copy of his extremely rare catalogue is in the Knight Collection at Chawton House.
11. The fullest account of these bookplates, designed by Charles Sherborn, as well as those of Thomas Knight I and II (Edward Austen Knight's adoptive grandfather and adoptive father), Edward Austen Knight, and Edward Knight is that by Deborah Barnum in her 'Knight Family Bookplates': <https://readingwithaustenblog.com/knight-bookplates>. Montagu's wife Florence, neé Hardy (1850-1935), also took an interest in bookplates, sending two enquiries about them to the *Journal of the Ex-Libris Society* in 1906 (vol. 15, pp. 15, 101); information from Barnum.
12. This catalogue, part of the Knight Collection, is reproduced on the Chawton House website: <https://chawtonhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/1908Catalogue.pdf>.
13. Caroline Jane Knight, *Jane & Me: My Austen Heritage* (Victoria, Australia: Greyfriar Group, 2017).
14. Caroline Jane Knight, *Jane & Me*, p. 62. See also Devoney Looser's informative review, 'Pride and Precariousness: The Travails of Austen's "fifth-great niece"', *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 January 2019, pp. 8-9.
15. See 'The Knight Collection' on the Chawton House website: <https://chawtonhouse.org/the-library/library-collections/the-knight-collection>.
16. For the findings and efforts of the GLOSS team, see the *Reading with Austen Blog*: <https://readingwithaustenblog.com>
17. These inscriptions are recorded by David Gilson in his revised, corrected edition of *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1997). The first edition of 1982 misdates the inscription as '1850' and states mistakenly that the volumes were a gift from Marianne's father, Edward Austen Knight, rather than her elder brother Edward.
18. See Janine Barchas, 'Welcome Back Home, Jane!' on the Chawton House website, 22 February 2017. Barchas notes that the first-edition volumes were 'rebound as a uniform set' in 1858, and then 'touched up in 1980' before their acquisition by Jane Austen's House: <https://chawtonhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Welcome-back-home-Jane.pdf> (p. 5).
19. Sophia Hillan, *Mary, Lou & Cass: Jane Austen's Nieces in Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2011), p. 221. Hillan quotes from a letter by Marianne Knight to her nephew Montagu Knight of 22 July 1895 that reveals Marianne's loss of memory; she died four months later, on 4 December.

20. Henry Austen, 'Biographical Notice of the Author', 1818, in *Persuasion*, ed. Janet Todd and Antje Blank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 330.
21. Donations to the cause can be made through the website of North American Friends of Chawton House, <https://www.nafch.org/give-join>: check the box 'Check here if your donation is strictly for the GLOSS fund (Lost Sheep Campaign)' on the donation page. Donors become official members of GLOSS.
22. The books are Lactantius, *Lucii Coelii Lactantii Firmiani Opera* (1684), sold by Unsworth c. 2010; David Hume, *Essays, Moral and Philosophical* (1742), sold at Christie's on 15 November 2013; Frederick Louis Norden, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* (1757), withdrawn from sale by Bonhams on 3 November 2015; Bernard de Montfaucon, *The Travels of the Learned Father Montfaucon thro' France and Italy* (1712), sold at Forum Auctions on 8 December 2016; and Edward Lisle, *Observations in Husbandry* (1757), sold at Gildings Auctioneers on 3 January 2017, and Emanuel Mendes da Costa, *A Natural History of Fossils*, sold at Dominic Winter on 10 April 2019.
23. Jane Austen, 'Plan of a Novel', 1816, in *Later Manuscripts*, ed. Janet Todd and Linda Bree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 228 and n. 21.
24. The books are Bernard Nieuwentyt, *The Religious Philosopher* (1745), sold at Dreweatts & Bloomsbury on 17 August 1999; Charles-Alphonse du Fresnoy, *The Art of Painting* (1783), sold at Swann Galleries on 24 April 2006; Claude Etienne Savary, *Lettres sur l'Egypte* (1786), sold at Christie's New York on 5 April 2016; and George Anson, *A Voyage Round the World* (1748), sold at Christie's New York on 7 December 2017.
25. Deborah Barnum, 'Reading with Jane Austen—Women Writers in the Godmersham Park Library, Episode 2', *Reading with Austen Blog* 28 March 2020: <https://readingwithaustenblog.com/2020/03/28/reading-with-jane-austen-women-writers-in-the-godmersham-park-library-episode-2/>.
26. Austen quotes from letters by 'my dear M^{rs} Piozzi' in writing to Cassandra on 11 June 1799 and 9 December 1808, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 46, 162.

The Digweeds and Steventon

Jane Hurst

Following the acquisition of three Digweed miniatures by Jane Austen's House in Chawton, there has been interest in the family who lived close to Jane's early home at Steventon Rectory. This article gives some of their background and looks at the possible sitters for these portraits.



*Mary Susannah Digweed (née Lyford)
by George Jackson (1811) Courtesy of
Jane Austen's House.*



*Francis William or William Francis
Digweed by George Jackson (1811)
Courtesy of Jane Austen's House.*

The Digweed Family Background

The Digweed family seem to have begun to settle in North Hampshire in the late 1600s. They started in the Burghclere area and gradually spread south to Kingsclere and beyond.

The earliest members of the family who were known to Jane Austen were Hugh Digweed (c1738-1798) and his wife Ruth (c1740-1791) who leased Steventon Manor Farm from Thomas Knight of Godmersham and Chawton. The first mentions in the Knight archives¹ of Digweeds having a connection here were in 1757 and 1758² when Thomas Knight wrote to his Steward, Edward Randall, saying that he was surprised that 'Digweed' thought that the rent was too high and discussing the articles of agreement for a lease starting at Michaelmas 1758. In the February, Randall was asked to have work done on the property as the previous

tenant had mismanaged it and, in June, there was talk of a new pond being made.

The new tenants of Steventon Manor Farm must have been the parents of Hugh Digweed – probably Richard (1706-1785) and Mary (1705-1762?) as it was recorded in 1764³ that ‘Digweed’ had rheumatism and that does not sound like a young man of about twenty-six. It was also noted that the tenant had not paid his rent recently, either.

The 1760s were an important time for Jane Austen’s father, George, as well. In April 1764, he married Cassandra Leigh and they set up home in nearby Deane Parsonage as Steventon Rectory was not in a fit state for the couple and their growing family. Shortly after the wedding of George Austen, Hugh Digweed must have married Ruth although no record has yet been found. The couple settled in Kingsclere where their first two children were baptised – John in 1766 and Frances in 1768. They then moved to Steventon as their only daughter, Frances, was buried there having died on 11th March 1770 aged two years old. Their four remaining children were baptised in the village church – Harry in 1771, James in 1774, William Francis in 1776 and Francis William in 1781.

The choice of the children’s names is interesting. As the Austens and the Digweeds were the main families in the village, they came to know each other very well and there is some similarity in given names. Harry Digweed was baptised only a few months before Henry Thomas Austen, and both families had a James and a Francis William. That the Digweeds had a William Francis followed by a Francis William may be explained by them wanting to preserve the memory of the only daughter, baby Frances.

As few Steventon parish documents have survived, it is not easy to form a picture of the early life of the Digweed boys although a plan of ‘Steventon Manor Farm and New Farm in the parishes of Steventon and Ashe occupied by – Digweed’⁴ was made for the Knights in the early 1770s and this shows the extent of the property. Other glimpses come from brushes with the law. In June 1773, there was a warrant for the apprehension of several men ‘to answer complaint of Hugh Digweed of Steventon, yeoman,’⁵ and, in September 1778, ‘Hugh Digweed of Steventon, yeoman,’ gave evidence ‘against Thomas Holdaway his servant for absenting himself without leave’.⁶ Later, in December 1786, Hugh offered a reward of 10 gns [£10.50] for information about the ‘two fat hogs’ stolen from his sty during the night.⁷

The original Digweed tenants of the Manor Farm (Richard and Mary) had two other sons – one of whom was called Richard after his father. He had married Amy Soper on 24th January 1760 in Steventon Church and their only child, Mary, was baptised there in June the following year. In March 1779 Richard Digweed junior, jointly with the Revd George Austen, invested £810 16s 7d in Consols 3% stock⁸ and later, in 1782, these were transferred to Richard’s daughter, Mary, about the time that she came of age. Presumably Richard and Amy realised that there would be no more children and that they needed to make provision for their only child in case of their deaths. Amy was buried two years later in Hannington.

In fact, the Revd George’s accounts with Hoare’s Bank show that he received

twice yearly payments of £12 3s 0d, in January and in July each year. Mary was then paid – sometimes annually, sometimes bi-annually – and often quite a while after George had the money. The last recorded bank payment to Mary was in October 1800 while George had the interest until he died. Had he, then, paid her in cash? She was only living in Kingsclere about ten miles away and became quite wealthy before marrying in her fifties a gentleman who was twenty-five years her junior!

Back at Steventon Manor Farm, Hugh Digweed acquired land in Ecchinswell from the estate of John Woodly as well as other property. Was he putting together legacies for the futures of his children? In March 1791, Hugh's wife Ruth was buried at Steventon leaving a household of men – Hugh and sons John twenty-five, Harry twenty, James seventeen, William Francis fifteen and Francis William ten. Like many in the area, they held gun licences and kept beagles. In September 1796, Jane Austen wrote from Rowling in Kent to Cassandra at the Rectory that 'Mr Digweed is to be informed that illness has prevented [the Steward] Seward's coming over to look at the intended Repairs to the Farm, but that he will come as soon as he can.'⁹ At about the same time, Hugh's son James went to Queens College, Oxford, in order to become a clergyman. Was this choice influenced by his namesake, James Austen?

If you have visited Steventon Church then you may have noticed the various memorials to the Digweed family. The earliest is a stone which states

Under this stone are deposited
the remains of
Hugh Digweed,
who died March 22nd, 1798,
aged 60 Years.

Also mentioned are his wife, Ruth, and infant daughter Frances.

Hugh wrote his will about a month before he died and in it he set out his wishes.¹⁰ Eldest son John was left all the Ecchinswell and Kingsclere property (except for one house) and all the stock, implements, animals and crops there subject to a legacy of £3,000. Third son James was given the Kingsclere house, £2,000 in 3% consols and £1,000 in cash. The youngest son, Francis William, was to have the £3,000 legacy at the age of twenty-two, with interest of 3% for his 'use and benefit' in the meantime. Second and fourth sons, Harry and William Francis, were left cottages in Steventon, the lease of the Manor Farm together with the stock, implements, etc. equally between them. John and Harry were the executors and guardians of Francis William during his minority.

The Digweed Boys

John Digweed

The eldest Digweed son was John who had been baptised in Kingsclere in 1766,

before his parents took Steventon Manor Farm. He is not obviously mentioned in Jane Austen's letters and was probably already living in the Ecchinswell and Kingsclere property left to him by his father when the surviving correspondence starts. In December 1798, Jane talked of 'the three Digweeds' visiting but, as this was shortly after the death of their father, they were probably the brothers left at the Manor Farm rather than John.

The Land Tax records for 1800 show that John was assessed for the property that he had inherited and so it is unlikely that he would have had his likeness taken c1811 in Steventon; he would have been aged forty-five and quite a bit older than the two gentlemen pictured who both look to be of a similar age.

When John died in February 1843, it was reported in the *Hampshire Chronicle* that 'His loss will be felt by the Poor'. The old Ecchinswell village church, of which he had been Church Warden, was demolished eleven years after John was buried there but the site is marked by his gravestone.

Harry Digweed

The first of the Digweed children to be baptised in Steventon, Harry was born just about a year after his infant sister, Frances, died. While his next youngest brother, James, was destined for the academic life and the Church, Harry stayed at home and helped run the Manor Farm. Together with younger sibling William Francis, Harry was left property in the village by his father, including the remaining lease of Manor Farm and everything that went with it. He and his oldest brother John were made the guardians of young Francis William who was only about seventeen when his father died. This responsibility was to last until the youngster reached the age of twenty-two in about 1803.

The first mention of one of the younger Digweed generation in Jane Austen's surviving letters is from 24th October 1798 when she writes 'in my writing-box was all my worldly wealth, 71., and my dear Harry's deputation.'¹¹ A couple of days later, Jane wrote 'James Digweed called & I gave him his brother's deputation.'¹² This was permission for Harry to shoot over the Steventon lands of Jane's brother, Edward. Registers of gentlemen's and gamekeepers' game certificates were published annually in local newspapers.

At the end of December 1798, Jane wrote that 'We are to have Company to dinner on Friday; the three Digweeds & James—We shall be a nice silent party I suppose.'¹³ So who were 'the three Digweeds' who went to Steventon Rectory that first Christmas after their father's death?

The eldest brother, John, was probably in his own property which leaves Harry, James, William Francis and Francis William. James had already been appointed Curate of Steventon and so was probably in the area – so was young Francis William left at home or was he living with his guardian brother John?

Harry was still at Steventon Manor Farm and in charge in January 1801 when the Austens were planning to leave the village for Bath. Jane wrote to her sister, Cassandra, about the future of the family's bailiff, John Bond, saying that 'under Harry Digweed, who if John had quitted Cheesedown would have been eager to

engage him as superintendent at Steventon, would have kept an horse for him to ride about on ... & I think would certainly have been a more desirable Master altogether'.¹⁴ Harry was also 'of Steventon' when he was a party to his brother James' marriage settlement in June 1803.

Some time after this, Harry left Steventon, married Jane Terry and settled in Alton and Chawton. Here they were reported on regularly by Jane in her letters. All seemed well although debts must have been accumulating and, in the early 1820s, Harry took his family to Brussels (where his daughter died) and then to Paris – where he passed away in 1848.

James Digweed

James Digweed was just a year older than Jane Austen and almost the same age as her brother Frank. What is not known is if the choice of career of his namesake, James Austen, influenced James Digweed in entering Queens College, Oxford, and becoming a clergyman. He was then appointed Curate of Steventon in early 1798, not long before his father died. In the will, James was left a dwelling in Kingsclere, £2,000 in 3% consols and £1,000 in cash. A few months later, he called at Steventon and Jane 'gave him his brother's deputation.'¹⁵ In mid-December, James was the subject of more news –

James Digweed has had a very ugly cut— how could it happen?—It happened by a young horse which he had lately purchased, & which he was trying to back into a stable;—The Animal kicked him down with its forefeet, & kicked a great hole in his head;—he scrambled away as soon as he could, but was stunned for a time, & suffered a good deal of pain afterwards.¹⁶

This wound may well have left a scar which can be seen above his left eye on one of the miniatures!

James Digweed certainly seems to have been more sociable than his brothers as Jane mentions him several times at this period – visiting and attending balls in January 1799¹⁷ and November 1800.¹⁸ Perhaps James was looking for a wife suitable for a clergyman? Less than two weeks after the last ball, Jane wrote to Martha Lloyd that 'You are to dine here Tuesday to meet James Digweed, whom you must wish to see before he goes to Kent.'¹⁹ He had, in fact, just been appointed Curate for the parish of Leybourne near Rochester in Kent. On 20th / 21st November that year, Jane sent more news to Cassandra:

The three Digweeds all came on tuesday, & we played a pool at Commerce. – James Digweed left Hampshire to day. I think he must be in love with you, from his anxiety to have you go to the Faversham Balls, and likewise from his supposing, that the two Elms fell from their greif at your absence.—Was not it a galant idea?—It never occurred to me before, but I dare say it was so.²⁰

Nearer to Steventon, Mr Peter Debary had declined the Deane curacy and so Jane reported that

my father has thought it a necessary compliment to James Digweed to offer the Curacy to him, though without considering it as either a desirable or an eligible situation for him.— Unless he is in love with Miss Lyford, I think he had better not be settled exactly in this Neighbourhood, & unless he is very much in love with her indeed, he is not likely to think a salary of 50£ equal in value or efficacy to one of 75£.²¹

In fact, James's attentions do seem to have been focusing on Mary Susannah Lyford as they were married by Revd George Lefroy at Basingstoke in June 1803.²² By then, Jane had decided that 'Miss Lyford was very pleasant'.²³ The Austens already knew Mary's family as her father was a surgeon apothecary in nearby Basingstoke and attended Mrs Austen several times.²⁴

The happy couple set up home in Dummer where their first five children were baptised – Frances Susannah, 1804; John James, 1806; Marianne, 1808; Elizabeth, 1809 and Ellen Jane, 1811. Hugh Lyford was christened in Basingstoke in 1813.

While the Digweeds were in Dummer, James completed the 'Returns to the Enquiries of 1810' for the Diocese. In it he named himself as the Curate with a salary of £40 and a 'house, garden, 4a of meadow land and surplice fees'.²⁵ This was not a valuable post and James seems to have been looking for more income as Jane noted that 'now it is said that Mr Peach (...) wants to have the Curacy of Overton; & if he does leave Wootton, James Digweed wishes to go there'.²⁶ Sadly did not get this curacy until 1822.

Despite having moved away, the Digweeds still kept in touch with their Steventon friends and family with Jane writing that they dined there on several occasions – the distance between the two homes was just over four miles. It was during this period that the Digwood miniatures were probably painted. James Austen's daughter, Caroline, wrote later that 'My mother's picture was taken this year – greatly against her own will. It was a miniature by a Mr Jackson, who came round the neighbourhood on speculation. This was in May'.²⁷

So it certainly seems possible that James and his wife, Mary, would have decided to have had their portraits taken as well when they heard that George Jackson was in the area. James was aged about thirty-seven at this time and Mary was slightly younger. If the miniature is of James, he looks well but has a scar on the left-hand side of his forehead – possibly the result of having 'a great hole in his head' over ten years before.

The next curacy that interested James was that of the parish of Wield. In February 1812, he obtained a licence with the comment that he was to 'live at Basingstoke as no convenient lodging can be obtained nearer'.²⁸ The first time that he was recorded as taking a marriage in the village was in December 1811 and the last time in March 1816. The distance was over eleven miles and James does not seem to have travelled there for every service as some marriages were performed by the Curate of Preston Candover. James also looked after the congregation of nearby Medstead, performing a wedding there in January 1812. Interestingly, marriages at the two villages never took place on the same day so James would visit one and then the other at another time. Later Curates here were members of the Coulthard

and Terry families, both known to the Austens.

At last, in June 1822, James was made Curate of Wootton St Lawrence with the proviso that he was 'to live in the glebe house'.²⁹ So, again, the Digweeds moved with James being 'of Wootton Vicarage' when he performed the marriage of his daughter Frances Susannah in November 1832. By this time, he had ceased to be Steventon's Curate. The reason for the retirement was probably that his father-in-law, John Lyford of Basingstoke, surgeon, died in November 1829. James and his wife were left land and property and their children the interest from £3,000 invested at 3%.³⁰

The one post that James continued to hold was that of Wootton St. Lawrence. In 1834, he was given permission to 'live in Oakley because the glebe house is occupied'³¹ and three years later, he went to live in Deane Rectory.³² In the 1841 census, recently widowed James was at home with his daughters Marianne and Ellen Jane. His son, John James, was also a Curate – of Ewhurst and Sherborne St John but allowed to live at Deane. James died in August 1862 and was buried in Steventon Church with his wife, Mary.

William Francis Digweed

William Francis was born ten years after his oldest brother and seems to have followed his father into agriculture. Together with his older brother, Harry, he was left property in Steventon including the residue of the lease of the Manor Farm and 'and all the rest ... of effects stock and implements in husbandry cattle corn and grain in and about ... money securities for money and all other my furniture goods chattels and effects'. With this, they were able to carry on and potentially provide a home for their youngest sibling, Francis William.

William must have been one of the 'three Digweeds' who visited the Austens in 1790s and who met Jane at the end of her 'four days of dissipation' in November 1801.³³ A few years after this, his brother, Harry, left the Manor Farm and William took over the running of the property. In 1808, he paid the annual rent of £624 and, the next year, a dinner was given in his barn 'to all the poor of the parish' for the Jubilee of the King's Coronation.³⁴

From this period, the diaries of Mary, wife of Jane's brother the Revd James Austen, survive.³⁵ They give a detailed view of the life of the Austens and their friends and relations and we learn that William Digweed was often invited to take tea or dine at the Rectory, sometimes on his own and sometimes with others. Perhaps they felt sorry for him alone at the Manor Farm and it is possible that William joined in with evening entertainments such as card games and informal dancing. Sometimes the Austens went to William for tea or dinner at the Manor Farm.

One reason for visiting William might have been to view his new 'thrashing-mill', 'the horsewalk of which is 30 feet, and the horizontal wheel 14 feet in diameter' as Charles Vancouver reported in his *General View of the Agriculture of Hampshire* of 1810. Despite costing the enormous sum of £250, William expected the machine to pay for itself as it only needed two men and four boys to operate it.



William Digweed's stone in the graveyard of St Nicholas' Church, Steventon

He did not neglect his workers though. When the hay was got in, William put on a 'merry-making' with young women running for a straw bonnet, girls competing for two pink ribbons, boys in sacks for harvest gloves, a race for a handkerchief, donkey races and other jollifications.³⁶

There were also times when William visited Chawton to meet with Jane's brother, Edward, on business and he would then be able to act as postman between Jane and her nieces Anna and Caroline, daughters of brother James Austen.³⁷ Sadly William never married but he still attended various balls and even acquired a piano, leading Jane to write to Caroline, who possessed no instrument, 'Would it not be a good plan for you to go & live entirely at Mr Wm Digweed's?'³⁸

It was during this period that the miniatures were probably painted. The third one is of another gentleman which has 'Francis W Digweed Esqr, Steventon Manor' on the back in pencil. This does seem to be a case of mistaken identity. Francis William was seven years younger than his brother James and yet this sitter looks much more of the age of William Francis who was only two years younger than James. Also, as will be seen below, Francis moved away to Greywell and, having married, was never mentioned by Mary Austen as having visited them at Steventon. Meanwhile, William Francis was almost a part of the Austen family – eating with them at least once a month. It is easy to imagine that Mary Austen would have encouraged William to have his portrait done along with his brother and sister-in-law. As he never had any children, a picture of him would probably

have been left to his brother James's family and descended with the others. Later, there could have been confusion between the names William Francis and Francis William.

In December 1819, Revd James Austen died and his brother Henry took over. James's widow moved to Ashe and William Digweed visited her there. One responsibility that he took on was the payments to the Cullum family with whom Jane's brother, George, lived. There were regular ones for the day-to-day expenses as well as extra ones such as 10s 6d for a hat in January 1836.³⁹ George died in 1838.

With 1839 came the Steventon Tithe apportionment which showed that William was farming 1,011 acres belonging to Jane's brother Edward while owning 4 acres himself.⁴⁰ The 1841 census recorded yeoman William at home with his nephew, John James Digweed (brother James' son), and one servant. Ten years later, the two men were still together and William was said to employ eighteen men. A year later, he made his will although he was a bit premature as he did not die until 5th April 1863. His executors were brother Francis William of Greywell and nephew John James of Steventon. A silver flagon inscribed 'The gift of William F. Digweed, Gent., 1867' was given to St Nicholas in Steventon, the church he had attended for almost ninety years.

Francis William Digweed

Francis William Digweed, the baby of the family, was baptised in Steventon in September 1781 and only aged about ten when his mother died. His father was buried seven years later and his brothers John and Harry became his guardians until he was aged twenty-two, when he would receive £3,000.

At some point before April 1806, Francis took on the lease of Greywell Farm from the main land owner of the village, Lord Dorchester. Aged twenty-four, he then married Elizabeth Harding in Winchester. Elizabeth had been born in Houghton in Sussex before the family moved to Farlington in Hampshire. The couple settled into village life in their property of over 380 acres which included a hop garden, meadow, arable land and a plantation. Sadly, Francis and Elizabeth seem not to have had any children.

As there is no mention of Francis visiting family friends, James and Mary Austen, in Mary's diaries, it seems very unlikely that Francis was the subject of one of the miniatures done in Steventon. If he had been, one would expect that his wife would have been painted as well and her portrait kept with his. All of this suggests that it was William Francis and not the younger Francis William who was the third subject.

By the time of the 1851 census, the couple were seventy and Francis' land holding had reduced to 111 acres – for which he employed four labourers. A year later, he was named as an executor of his brother William's will and then his wife, Elizabeth, died.

One might have expected Francis to have settled down to life as a widower but, instead, he married Ellen/Eleanor Hillyer of Exeter at St James' Church there just

over a year later! It does seem to have been a long way to go to find a wife, but she had been born in Hampshire and was the sister of Robert Purkis Hillyer, the second husband of the sister of Francis Digweed's first wife Elizabeth. Robert was Naval surgeon and then became Inspector of Hospitals and Fleets.

Again, Francis had no children and so, when he died in December 1865, there were bequests to his new wife, his own relatives and those of his first wife. These included descendents of his brothers Harry and James.⁴¹ Francis also left £200 stock, the dividends from which were to be distributed annually at Christmas in bedding and clothing among the aged poor of the parish of Greywell.⁴² Francis William was the last of the Digweed brothers to die and nothing much was heard of them for over 150 years. Now we have the chance to meet two of them face-to-face.



The Digweed memorial tablet in St Nicholas Church, Steventon.

Notes

Much of the information on which the work is based has come from two very important books – *Jane Austen's Letters* and *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family*. Both of these are the result of years of detailed and exhaustive research by Deirdre Le Faye and without them I, for one, would not have been able to piece this story together.

1. HRO 39M89, 18M51.
2. HRO 39M89/E/B621, 39M89/E/B561/4, 39M89/E/B622, 18M61/BOX C.
3. HRO 18M61/BOX C.
4. HRO 39M89/E/B384/16.
5. HRO 44M69/G3/451/1-2.
6. HRO 44M69/G3/521/1-2.
7. *Reading Mercury*, 1 Jan 1797.
8. Hoare's Bank 98, fol.109.
9. Deirdre Le Faye (2011), *Jane Austen's Letters*, OUP. Letter 6.
10. TNA PROB 11/1313/249.
11. Le Faye (2011), Letter 9.
12. *Ibid.* Letter 10.
13. *Ibid.* Letter 15.
14. *Ibid.* Letter 31.
15. *Ibid.* Letter 10.
16. *Ibid.* Letter 14.
17. *Ibid.* Letter 18.
18. *Ibid.* Letter 24.
19. *Ibid.* Letter 26.
20. *Ibid.* Letter 27.
21. *Ibid.* Letter 30.
22. *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 20th June 1803.
23. Le Faye (2011), Letter 31.
24. *Ibid.* Letter 10.
25. HRO 21M65/E7/1/54.
26. Le Faye (2011), Letter 73.
27. *Reminiscences of Jane Austen's niece Caroline Austen*. Jane Austen Society, p.26.
28. HRO 21M65/E6/12/27.
29. HRO 21M65/E6/12/209.
30. HRO 286M87/19.
31. HRO 21M65/E6/13/103.
32. HRO 21M65/E6/13/210.
33. Le Faye (2011), Letter 33.
34. *Reminiscences of Jane Austen's niece Caroline Austen*. Jane Austen Society, p.22.
35. HRO 23M93/62.

- 36. HRO 63M84/234/8.
- 37. Deirdre Le Faye (2011), Letter 142.
- 38. *Ibid.* (Letter 156).
- 39. HRO 39M89/E/B314/8, see Jane Hurst (2004), 'Poor George Austen', JAS
Annual Report.
- 40. HRO 21M65/F7/223/1.
- 41. HRO 286M87/25.
- 42. Victoria County History vol. 4. *Greywell or Grewell*. London, 1911.

Death duties on Jane Austen's estate

John Avery Jones

Jane Austen's will¹ was made on 27 April 1817, three months before her death on 18 July 1817. It left legacies of £50 to her brother Henry, who had been made bankrupt in March 1816, discharged from bankruptcy in 8 June 1816,² and by the time of her death had taken Holy Orders and was curate of Chawton; and £50 to Mme Bignon, who was the companion of Henry's first wife Eliza de Feuillide and after her death in 1813 Henry's housekeeper and who, like Eliza, had fled from the Terror in France.³ Mme Bignon would have become unemployed on Henry's bankruptcy and may have lost money in Henry's bank, hence Jane's request in the will that the legacy be paid as soon as convenient. The residue of her estate was left to her sister Cassandra who was appointed sole executrix. In addition she left an informal note, which was not admitted to probate, bequeathing a gold chain to Louisa Knight, and a lock of hair to Fanny Knight (both daughters of her brother Edward who had taken the name Knight⁴ after his adoption by a distant cousin, Thomas Knight); Cassandra asked if she would prefer it to be mounted in a ring or a brooch, and she chose the latter.⁵

The will was probably written without professional help and, as one would expect, was carefully drafted, for example referring not only to 'everything of which I may die possessed' but also 'or which may be hereafter due to me,' presumably with payment from her publisher, Murray, in mind, although this was legally unnecessary as future receipts would derive from the copyright that she did possess at the time of her death. More importantly she did not make legacies free of duty so the legatees would have had to pay legacy duty on them (see below).⁶ One might quibble that it does not revoke earlier wills, but there may have been none, and in any case it would be unnecessary as the will does not leave any doubt about this.

The will was unwitnessed and so in order to obtain probate, John Grove Palmer, whose youngest daughter was Jane's brother Charles's first wife Frances Fitzwilliam ('Fanny'), who had died in childbirth in 1814, and another daughter, Harriet Ebel Palmer, who would in 1820 become Charles's second wife,⁷ attended and swore an affidavit confirming Jane Austen's handwriting and signature. Witnessing of wills only became compulsory in 1837.⁸ Cassandra as executor would have had to swear to the value of the assets in the estate and to administer it according to law⁹ but this is not a document available to the public. Probate was granted on 10 September 1817 by the Prerogative Court of Doctors' Commons.¹⁰ This was a society of ecclesiastical lawyers in premises close to the present Knightrider Street, London EC4, which is described in *David Copperfield*. The Court of Probate Act 1857 subsequently abolished the testamentary jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts.

Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*,¹³ which differentiated the tax rate according to the relationship with the deceased, and which itself was based on a Roman tax imposed by Augustus. But all that could be achieved in the time available was a progressive stamp duty on receipts for legacies.¹⁴ An increase was made in 1789 to the duty on probates and on receipts for legacies of larger estates but the increase did not extend to legacies to the wife,¹⁵ children and grandchildren of the deceased, which was the beginning of the recognition of relationships.¹⁶ Naturally these duties were unsuccessful as there was no requirement for receipts to be issued.

Legacy duty was made effective by Pitt through the Legacy Duty Act 1796,¹⁷ an Act that remained in force until the abolition of the duty in 1949, by imposing the liability for payment of the duty on the executors¹⁸ who deducted the duty on paying the legacy.¹⁹ It remained a tax on each legatee;²⁰ it was merely that the executors were liable to pay it on the legatee's behalf. Full consanguinity provisions were introduced at the same time to make it more like the Dutch tax. The rates of duty were originally: legacies to brothers or sisters and their descendants (i.e. nephews and nieces) 2%, to uncles and aunts and their descendants (i.e. cousins) 3%, to great-uncles or great-aunts and their descendants (i.e. second cousins) 4%, and to more remote relatives or 'strangers in blood' 6%.²¹

Pitt had introduced two Bills for this tax, one relating to personal property and the other to real (landed) property. The former was passed easily but the latter proved to be extremely controversial, with suggestions that it was a way of nationalising all land.²² Pitt's motion that the real property Bill be read a third time 'tomorrow',²³ following the defeat of the motion that it be read immediately, was passed in the House of Commons only with the casting vote of the Speaker and it was withdrawn as being too controversial,²⁴ leaving the tax restricted to personal property (i.e. everything other than landed property, but including leaseholds); the extension of death duties to real property would not happen until Gladstone's Succession Duty Act 1853. Various increases in the rates of duty were made so that by the time of Jane Austen's death the rate for brothers and sisters had increased first to 2.5%²⁵ and then to 3%, and the top rate to 10%.²⁶ The yield from legacy duty and the duty on probates was significant, amounting in 1817 to £1.666m out of total tax revenue of £58.5m.²⁷

One of the features of legacy duty was that assets were valued at the date of the legacy duty account rather than the date of death, because the focus was on the receipt by the legatee rather than the estate at death. This was decided in 1810 by the Court of Exchequer in *Attorney-General v Lord George Henry Cavendish*²⁸ in which the issue was whether interest accrued after the date of death up to the date of the account was to be included, which made a difference of about £13,000 to the value of that large estate. The Court decided that the interest accrued up to the date of the account was included on the basis that if, for example, the asset in the estate was a house which burnt down after the date of death, or was a bank account and the bank failed after the date of death, duty should not be payable on non-existent values.



[AC27 5288] Cassandra Austen's stock ledger at the Bank of England showing the addition of £600 Navy Fives from Jane Austen's estate (the E Austen being an error). Reproduced by kind permission of the Bank of England.

Cassandra's legacy duty account

Since legacy duty is on the amount received rather than the estate at death, the form of the Account²⁹ proceeds from the assumption that much of the estate will have been converted into money before being distributed. It was completed by Cassandra on 10 November 1817³⁰ as follows (the items in italics are those on the form followed by my comments):

1. Money received

Cash in the House £25

Cash at the Bankers £45. This was at Hoare's Bank.³¹ The account was closed on 12 September 1817 two days after probate by a payment of that amount to Cassandra.³²

*£200 5% Bank Annuities sold at a price of 105½ for £211.*³³ These 'Navy Fives' as they were popularly known were sold on 10 September 1817, the day probate was granted and therefore the earliest date they could be sold, and the cash was received by her bank on the same day.³⁴ It did not involve rushing the probate round to the Bank of England the day it was issued as in fact Cassandra was selling stock beneficially owned by the estate but making title out of stock that was already in her name, which is perfectly proper. Indeed it may be an early case of stock lending: from herself in her personal capacity to herself in her executorship capacity. See the Illustration of Cassandra's stock ledger at the Bank of England.³⁵

*Cash for Book and other Debts on simple*³⁶ *Contract* £93 15s. This is the amount due from Murray for sales of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*. An extract from Murray's ledger contained in Jane Aiken Hodge, *Only a Novel: The Double Life of Jane Austen*³⁷ shows the make-up of this item. It relates to the sale after October 1816 of 74 copies of *Emma* at 13s and 55 copies at 13s 9d for a total of £85 18s 3d, or £77 6s 9d after commission, from which £5 5s is deducted for advertising (in Murray's own catalogue!), leaving £72 1s 9d. For the second edition of *Mansfield Park* it is made up to 19 October 1817, obviously for the purpose of the Account, and relates to the sale of 46 copies in 1816 and 22 copies in 1817 both at 10s 6d for a total of £35 14s, or £32 2s 4d after commission, from which two payments of £5 5s for advertising are deducted leaving £21 12s 4d.³⁸ These two total £93 14s 1d, which is close to the figure in the Account. Although listed under

Money received in fact Murray paid Cassandra £80 on 8 December 1817, so that it was paid a month later, and then not in full.³⁹

Total £374 15s.

2. *Payments out of the Money received as above.*

Charges of obtaining the Probate £22 1s. There was a payment of this sum by Cassandra on 15 August 1817 to W. Tebbs.⁴⁰ The probate duty on the net estate of £781⁴¹ was £15, although this is not shown on the probate in the National Archives.⁴² If the duty was a disbursement included in this figure the actual fee seems modest.

Funeral Expenses £92. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester Cathedral charged 20 guineas for burial in the north aisle, and an additional 10 guineas to lay an engraved stone on the grave which was done in October 1818 with the stone seen today not referring to her books.⁴³ There is a payment by Cassandra on 15 August 1817 to Woolls & Co of £98 1s which is likely to be for this and the following item (except for a remaining 11s).⁴⁴ The breakdown of the remainder is not known. The total figure seems high. The funeral expenses of a contemporary author, Ann Radcliffe who died in 1823 with a smaller estate, were only £48 10s; those of Coleridge, who died in 1834, were £73 16s; and Charles Lamb, who died in 1834, only £46 4s.⁴⁵

Expenses attending the Executorship £6 12s.

Debts on simple Contract £25. There is no obvious payment representing this but it could have been paid out of the cash in the house. One possibility is that it is for Mr Lyford the Winchester apothecary who looked after her in her last illness.⁴⁶ Another is that the payment on 29 October 1817 to her brother Charles represents payment of part of this liability.⁴⁷

Pecuniary Legacies £100. The legacies to Henry and Mme Bigeon, being over £20 and not being given free of duty, would also have been chargeable to legacy duty at the 3% and 10% respectively for which Cassandra was accountable as executor, although I doubt if one could still find evidence of this.

Total £245 13s. Total Received £374 15s; Total Paid £245 13s; Balance of Cash £129 2s.

3. *Property now constituting the residue.*

£400 5% Bank Annuities valued at 108 £432. This is the balance of the original £600 Navy Fives and is an example of its being revalued in accordance with the *Lord Cavendish* case. There was no interest paid between the date of death and the Account.⁴⁸

Household Goods and Furniture [no entry]

Books, Prints and China [no entry]

Wearing Apparel [no entry]

Jewels, Trinkets, and Ornaments of the Person [no entry]

Book and other Debts on simple Contract not collected [no entry]

Clear Residue £561 2s.

This declaration must have been accepted by the Commissioners of Stamps as she paid the legacy duty of £16 16s 8d which is 3% of that figure on 20 November 1817.⁴⁹

This Account gives rise to a number of concerns, mainly about what was not included. Starting with the last items, *household goods*: her writing table is in Jane Austen's House Museum⁵⁰ or was this in fact part of the household furniture owned by her mother? And did she actually buy 'a Pianoforte as good a one as can be got for thirty guineas.'⁵¹ when she moved to Chawton? *Books*: would not even copies of her own books have had some value, and did she not own other books (such as Frances Burney's *Camilla* of which she was a subscriber⁵²), including her music? *Wearing apparel*: her used clothes might indeed have had no value. *Jewels*: we know that in addition to the gold chain left to Louisa Knight by the letter of wishes,⁵³ she owned a gold chain (which may or may not be a different one) and topaz cross⁵⁴ given to her by her brother Charles out of his prize money for the capture of *Le Scipio* in 1801,⁵⁵ a 'single brilliant centre ring' inherited from Mary Leigh in 1797,⁵⁶ a turquoise and ivory bracelet, and a gold ring with a turquoise stone.⁵⁷ Cassandra must have been familiar with these, so how is it that she made nil entries for these and declared that 'the foregoing is a just and true Account and Valuation of the Residue of the Personal Estate of the deceased'? I cannot help thinking that if their roles had been reversed Jane would have made a better job of the Account.

The point of greater interest and difficulty is whether something should have been included in the Account for the value of the future sales of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* and the copyright of the then unpublished *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*.⁵⁸ The answer to this may depend on whether she was treated as carrying on a trade of publishing because she published the former two books on commission under which the author took the publishing risk and paid the publisher 10% of sales for doing the work. This was a relatively unusual publishing arrangement at the time, being adopted in only 34 of the 622 novels published in Britain in the 1810s.⁵⁹ If she were carrying on a trade, then the unsold books in the publisher's warehouse would be stock in trade and should be brought into account normally at cost, and the sales up to the time of the Account included, as it seems they were, as if one were making up a set of trading accounts. While we would class this as a trade for tax purposes today, it may not have occurred to anyone at the time to do so. If she were not carrying on a trade but merely making profits as an author carrying on a profession, then she would have no stock in trade and would bring nothing in until it was received.

As to *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* we know with hindsight that these were published just before the end of 1817 and earned £479 1s 2d by the end of 1818,⁶⁰ and ultimately £518 6s 5d.⁶¹ I have not seen any references to the date of the publishing agreement with Murray, which was on the same basis with the estate taking all the risk, but it is likely to have been before 10 November 1817, the date of the Legacy Duty Account. Henry wrote a 'Biographical Notice of the Author' as a preface which was dated 13 December 1817, the books were

advertised on 17 December 1817 with a publication date of 20 December 1817, and in spite of the 1818 on the title page came out before the end of that year.⁶² If so, the position is no different from that of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*. But if there was no publishing agreement at that date the only asset was the copyright. The Account form concentrates on tangible assets but in principle an intangible asset like copyright is no different. Although there is no heading for copyrights in the form, a note says 'In Cases attended with Special Circumstances to which the foregoing Form of Account may not be exactly suited, they may be introduced into the Account, or stated in a separate Paper and annexed.' None of the legacy duty accounts for the estates of other contemporary authors included any value for future sales, although these would exist only if the copyright had not been sold to the publisher as it would normally be, or any value for the copyright of unpublished works, until the estate of Frances Burney who died 23 years after Jane Austen.⁶³ Cassandra can certainly not be criticised for doing the same as the estates of other authors.

Finally, there is one omission that was obviously correct. She also had £25 7s in her brother Henry's bank, Austen, Maunde and Tilson (a partnership), which went bankrupt in 1816 for which her estate ultimately received 50% on completion of the bankruptcy some 26 years later in 1843.⁶⁴ The prospective value of this must have been nil and so it is not surprising that it is excluded.

One is impressed by the speed of administering the estate: probate was granted within two months of the death,⁶⁵ and the estate was distributed within four months. Today the 'executor's year' the informal time limit for doing so is often exceeded.

An interesting point is that on 10 September 1817 Cassandra (a) sold £200 Navy Fives from the estate's holding for £211, (b) paid £200 to Henry,⁶⁶ and (c) transferred £50 Navy Fives to Henry.⁶⁷ The payment of £200 cannot be repayment of a loan because as a recently-discharged bankrupt earning 52 guineas pa as a curate Henry cannot have lent £200 to Cassandra.⁶⁸ The transfer of £50 Navy Fives cannot be in payment of Henry's legacy for two reasons: first, it is too large because at the same price as she sold the stock it would be worth £52 15s, and secondly the Legacy Duty Account shows the whole of the £400 of Navy Fives as forming part of the residuary estate after payment of the legacies. I have not found any reason for the payment and transfer. One might speculate that either Jane Austen asked Cassandra to do this subsequent to making her will, or that Cassandra thought that Henry's needs were greater than hers.

I remember first seeing Jane Austen's legacy duty account as a framed copy hanging in the Nelson Room at Somerset House, the then headquarters of the Inland Revenue,⁶⁹ which was a room often used for meetings. One might think that their predecessors accepting a nil value for jewellery and books was not a good advertisement of their efficiency in collecting legacy duty.

Notes

1. Facsimile available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/sec->

- jane-austens-original-will/. It is also reproduced in Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen's Letters* 4th ed (Oxford, OUP, 2011) (Jane Austen Letters), Letter 158.
2. Deirdre Le Faye, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and her Family* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) (Chronology) 8 June 1816.
 3. EJ Clery, *Jane Austen: The Banker's Sister*, Biteback Publishing, 2017 (Clery), ch 6.
 4. Officially in 1812: biographical index in Jane Austen Letters.
 5. *Chronology* 29 July 1817. There is a mourning brooch containing a lock Jane Austen's hair in Jane Austen's House Museum and illustrated at <https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/20-mourning-brooch> but that one was given to Harriet Palmer.
 6. As far as I am aware it was not then customary to make legacies free of duty.
 7. John Palmer is noted in the Bibliographical Index in Jane Austen Letters as a former Attorney-General of Bermuda. Charles married Frances in Bermuda in 1807.
 8. Wills Act 1837 s 9 requiring two witnesses for the will to be valid.
 9. 55 Geo 3 c 184 s 38.
 10. A facsimile of the probate and of their oath is available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/JAusten-19thc.pdf>.
 11. Lord North was a courtesy title. He was actually 2nd Earl of Guildford. He was Prime Minister from 1770 to 1782
 12. This was the *Ordinantie op het middel van den twintigsten penning op de collaterale successien en den aankleve van dien, den 11 Maart 1723*, Groot Placaatboek VI, 's Gravenhage 1746, pp. 1024-1030. Tax rates varied according to the province but for Holland the rates in the 1770s were: direct descendants nil; other relatives up to the 4th degree 5% [the *twintigste* in the title = $\frac{1}{20}$ th or 5%]; spouse (if no children) $6\frac{2}{3}\%$ [Adam Smith's 'fifteenth' which is misprinted as 'fiftieth'], or (if children) nil; strangers 10% (*F. N. Sickenga, Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der belastingen in Nederland*, P. Engels, 1864). Adam Smith was mistaken about the top rate being 30%. I am grateful to Professor Henk Vording of Leiden University for this information.
 13. Glasgow Edition V.ii.h.4. The publication of *The Wealth of Nations* in March 1776 (incidentally less than three months after Jane Austen's birth) resulted in at least two other tax changes derived from the Dutch: a tax on male servants (advocated in V.ii.g.12, legislated by (1776) 17 Geo 3 c 39); and a tax on inhabited houses based on their annual value (advocated in V.ii.e.14, legislated by (1778) 18 Geo 3 c 26). And also in 1780 changes were made to beer duty to meet his detailed criticisms (not influenced by the Dutch) (advocated in V.ii.k.46-55, legislated by (1780) 20 Geo 3 c 35) (Stephen Dowell, *A History of Taxation and Taxes in England*, (London, Frank Cass, 1965) (Dowell), vol 2, 169 to 172).
 14. (1780) 20 Geo 3 c 28 varying from 2s 6d for a legacy under £20 to £1 for a legacy of £100 or more.

15. This is restricted to legacies to wives because in law (in England) a husband owned his wife's property.
16. (1789) 29 Geo 3 c 51.
17. (1796) 36 Geo 3 c 52.
18. Or administrators in the case of an intestacy.
19. S 6.
20. Unlike estate duty from 1894 and its successors capital transfer tax and inheritance tax which are taxes on the estate without regard to the identity of the legatees.
21. S 2.
22. About which Pitt explained that it was not a tax on capital and it could easily be paid out of earnings in the first four years after the succession; the Attorney General that it was a tax on the produce of land; and the Solicitor General that it was a tax on income to be paid by four instalments. Charles James Fox maintained (in my view, with some justification) that it was a tax on land: Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England (this is the forerunner of Hansard), 21 April 1796, vol 32 cols 1033-5, available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=eSEyAQAAIAAJ>. Another objection made in the course of the debate on the duty on personal property was that legacies to illegitimate children were charged at the highest rate: cols 1028-30.
23. Cobbett (see previous note), 21 April 1796, vol 32 col.1041. Of passing interest the MP who had proposed postponement of the third reading was John Crewe, later First Baron Crewe, the father of John Crewe, later Second Baron, who was a substantial debtor to Henry Austen and his bank; payment was eventually made to the sureties between 1830 and 1836.
24. Dowell vol 2 p 214.
25. (1808) 48 Geo 3 c 149 Sch Pt III.
26. (1815) 55 Geo 3 c 184 Sch Pt III. The full scale for deaths from 5 April 1805 where the legacy was paid after 31 August 1815 was: spouses nil; children and their descendants 1%; brothers and sisters and their descendants 3%; uncles and aunts and their descendants 5%; great uncles and aunts and their descendants 6%; more remote relatives and strangers in blood 10%.
27. Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom for the year ended 5 January 1818, (1818) HC 147. This was lower than it had been because of the abolition of income tax in 1816 which in the previous year brought in £12.3m.
28. 145 ER 1183, (1810) Wright. 82 available at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=L-9MAQAAMAAJ>.
29. The form uses this name, which is still in use: form IHT 400 is headed Inheritance Tax Account.
30. The original Account is in The National Archives IR 59/4. A picture of an extract from it is in the Jane Austen Society Report for 1967, 38. A copy is in Jane Austen's House museum.
31. *Chronology* traces this to three payments of interest on £600 Navy Fives on 9 July 1816, 8 January 1817, and 9 July 1817.

32. *Chronology*, 12 September 1817.
33. The sale is not in *Chronology* but the information is taken from the legacy duty account and it is in the Bank of England archives. The brokerage may be included in the Executorship expenses below. *Chronology* records a sale by Cassandra on 7 August 1817 of £100 Navy Fives for £104 17s 6d (having paid £1 1s 6d for a Letter of Attorney for the sale on 1 August 1817: presumably the Bank of England required a receipt for interest or the sale proceeds and a letter of attorney (of which £1 was stamp duty: (1815) 55 Geo 3 c 184 Sch Pt I) to a banker avoided the need for the stockholder to attend in person) which must be a sale out of her own holding of £1,140 Navy Fives because the estate's stock could not have been sold before probate (and on 30 September 1817 Cassandra paid £1 1s 6d for a Letter of Attorney for dividends and transfer of £600 of stock which was the estate's total holding and this was transferred to her on 7 October as shown in the Illustration; this is correct as all the £600 were still in Jane's name even though £200 had been sold beneficially out of the estate). It is possible that she made the sale because she felt the need to pay the funeral expenses (see n 44) before obtaining probate, or to comply with request in the will that the legacy to Mme Bignon be paid as soon as convenient.
34. *Chronology* 10 September 1817.
35. I wish to pay tribute to the enormous assistance I received from several members of the Bank's archives department. The reference to the document is AC27/5288 - Stock Ledger: Navy £5% Annuities, A, 5 Jul 1814 - 5 Jul 1822. The reference to 'By E Austen decd' is obviously a slip of the pen as the amount and date ties up with Jane Austen's holding.
36. This expression seems to be used in distinction to debt securities such as bonds.
37. Endeavour Press, 1972, plates between 168 and 169.
38. One of the deductions for advertising *Mansfield Park* is dated 31 December 1817 and should presumably not have been included in the balance for the Legacy Duty Account. The ledgers are not free from minor errors: the commission for *Emma* is understated by 4d and that for *Mansfield Park* overstated by 3d. One suspects that someone added the two items together in their head and made it £93 15s 1d, giving the figure in the Account.
39. Murray Archives 42870 f. 550. I am grateful to Professor Jan Fergus for this information. A further payment was made of £29 1s 5d on 6 February 1818 to make the payments up to £109 1s 5d (comprising £87 9s 1d for *Emma* and £21 12s 4d for *Mansfield Park* to 5 February 1818).
40. *Chronology*, 11 September 1817 (Hoare's Bank).
41. (1815) 55 Geo 3 c 184 Sch Pt III. The duty was highly progressive rising to £15,000 for an estate of £1m (£22,500 if there was no will); a duty on probates dates from 1694 when it was at a flat rate of 5s for estates over £20 (5 & 6 Will & Mar c 21) and continued until 1894. The date of death figure would have been slightly different because of the fluctuating value of the Navy Fives,

- which was slightly lower at the date of death (105¾ to 106, *The Times*, 19 July 1817), the figure for sales of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* would have been smaller at the date of death, and funeral and other expenses would not have been incurred, so the estate was still under £800 and in the same rate band.
- 42.55 Geo 3 c 184 Sch Pt III. Interestingly if she had died intestate the duty on the probate would have been £22, an encouragement to make a will that does not exist today.
 43. Deirdre Le Fay, 'The Final Year' in *The Joy of Jane*, Lansdown Media (Edinburgh, 2016, 2017) 10, 20.
 44. *Chronology*, 15 August 1817 (Hoare's Bank). There are references to a Mr and Miss Woolls in Letters 80 and 142 who are presumably connected.
 45. The National Archives IR 59/9, IR 59/19, IR 59/21.
 46. Jane Austen Letters, Letter 159.
 47. *Chronology*, 29 October 1817 (Hoare's Bank).
 48. See n 31 for the payment of interest on 9 July 1817.
 49. *Chronology*, 20 November 1817 (Hoare's Bank).
 50. Illustrated on their website <https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/1-jane-austens-writing-table>.
 51. Jane Austen Letters, Letter 63.
 52. *Chronology* 1796 (initial paragraph).
 53. Since the letter of wishes was not admitted to probate technically this was part of the residuary estate, or if already given included as 'The Value of such Effects as have not been converted into Money, but have been given away... by the Executor.'
 54. Illustration in Jane Austen Society Report 1966, 1.
 55. Referred to in Jane Austen Letters, Letter 38.
 56. Paula Byrne, *The Real Jane Austen: a Life in Small things*, Harper Perennial, 2013, Ch 13 and 14.
 57. The last item was sold by Sotheby's in July 2012 for £152,450 to Kelly Clarkson who intended to export it to the US. A temporary export ban was imposed and funds were raised, including £100,000 from an anonymous donor, to buy it back. The ring, together with the topaz cross and turquoise and ivory bracelet, are now in the Jane Austen's House museum. The ring is illustrated on their website at <https://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/25-jane-austens-ring>.
 58. I think one can assume that the unfinished *Sanditon* and *The Watsons* had no value for this purpose.
 59. Clery (n 3) ch 4.
 60. *Chronology* 25 February 1819.
 61. Fergus 16.
 62. *Chronology* 13 and 18 December 1817.
 63. I have looked at the legacy duty accounts in the National Archives for the estates of the following (with the reference and date of death in brackets): Ann Radcliffe (IR 59/9, 1823), David Ricardo (IR 59/10 1823), Byron (IR 59/11,

1824), Coleridge (IR 59/19, 1834), Charles Lamb (IR 59/21, 1834), James Mill (IR 59/23, 1836) and Frances Burney (IR 59/27, 1840); but there is no legacy duty account for Shelley (IR 59/6, 1822). Only the Legacy Duty Account for Frances Burney contains a valuation of manuscripts by a W Shoberl of £100, and of family letters ‘for the most part devoid of public interest’ valued by the executors at £50. The manuscripts were voluminous; many volumes of her diaries have since been published. For Coleridge there is an item for the sale of copyrights to Pickering & Co for £772 8s 4d in the Legacy Duty Account, and an affidavit correcting the value of the estate for probate duty, indicating that for that duty a value for them had been included; the point did not arise for legacy duty as the account was made after the sale. I have also tried to find legacy duty accounts for 15 other authors who died around this time, 8 of whom had no records and for the remainder there are no legacy duty records in the IR 19 series which contains only a selection for each year. No Scottish legacy duty records have survived.

64. Dividends in partnership the bankruptcy were paid of 6s 8d in the pound (*London Gazette*, 14 March 1843 p 872), and 3s 4d in the pound (*London Gazette*, 2 May 1843 p 1439).
65. There was a time limit of 6 months in 55 Geo 3 c 184 s 37 with power to extend the time under s 46 if the executor had not recovered the estate sufficiently to pay the duty.
66. *Chronology* 10 September 1817 (Hoare’s Bank).
67. See the Illustration for (a) and (c). The reference on the transfer of the £50 of stock to ‘H Austen’ ties up with a transfer to ‘Henry Thomas Austen of Chawton, Hants.’ The figure obscured by the blob has to be £200 for it to add up. The transfer of the £200 of stock to D Gibson describes him as ‘of the Stock Exchange,’ so this was a sale in the market.
68. Or to Jane otherwise it would have appeared as a liability in the Legacy Duty Account.
69. Legacy duty was under the control of the Board of Stamps (dating from 1694) who merged with the Board of Taxes (dating from 1665) in 1834 to become the Board of Stamps and Taxes, subsequently renamed as the Inland Revenue in 1849. They merged with the Board of Customs and Excise in 2005 to become the present HM Revenue and Customs.

What became of Mrs Powlett?

Stephen Mahony

There is a well-known reference in Jane Austen's letter to Cassandra dated 20th – 22nd June 1808 to a 'sad story about Mrs Powlett'.¹ Just as in *Mansfield Park*² Fanny Price first reads in a newspaper gossip column of Maria Rushworth's elopement with Henry Crawford, so Jane had read of Mrs Powlett's alleged adultery with Lord Sackville at an inn in Winchester.

We know what happened to the Rushworths. 'Mr Rushworth had no difficulty in procuring a divorce'.³ Maria is doomed to 'a retirement and reproach, which could allow no second spring of hope or character.' But what happened in real life to Laetitia Powlett?

She is buried in the churchyard of St Peter & St Paul's Church at Uplyme in Devon, where her grave has the following inscription:

Laetitia Mary
the Wife of
Thomas Lisle Follett, Esqr.
departed this life the 5th. Dec. 1842.
She was the only Child of
Westby Perceval, Esqr.
of Knights Brook in the County of Meath
and
Elizabeth his Wife, youngest Daughter
of
Stratford Canning, Esqr.⁴
of Garvagh in the County of Londonderry
and
was first married
to
Thomas Norton Powlett, Esqr.
a Major General
in the Army.⁵

At first sight this seems rather brazen. Her exposure had been humiliatingly public: first, in the newspaper accounts of the event, and then in the reports of her husband's action against Lord Sackville for crim. con. at Winchester Assizes in late July 1808. Her husband was a cousin of the Marquis of Winchester and her alleged lover would be the last Duke of Dorset. Then, as now, the newspapers relished scandal among the aristocracy.

The *Morning Post* reported 'The Lady, it is not denied, was in the apartment of the Sporting Lord; but, on being interrogated, she declared her innocence, and

that she had entered the apartment of his Lordship by mistake! On the other hand, it is affirmed, that she was seen secretly to enter the room *and shut the door after her*.⁶ The phrase ‘Sporting Lord’ referred not to Lord Sackville’s private life but to his ownership of successful racehorses.

Many provincial newspapers reported the story, some with their own embellishments. The *York Herald* claimed that

The Noble Buck who was lately detected in a Crim. Con. at the White Hart Inn, Winchester appears to have been a fat one. He offered Mr. Taylor, the peeping-landlord, £5,000 for himself, and £1,000 for each of his five children, on condition he should not divulge the secret ; but honest *Boniface*⁷ indignantly refused the offer, and drove off, in a Chaise and four, to Southampton, to inform the husband of his dishonour.⁸

The landlord was not called Taylor but Bell and the *Norfolk Chronicle* alleged ‘Mr. Bell, who kept the White Hart Inn, has since left the house, the licentious and vulgar having censured Bell and his wife for declaring the transaction.’⁹

It was a nationally known scandal and when the case came to trial the courtroom was crowded. The prosecution established that the Powletts appeared to their friends to have been happily married for ten years, but the testimony of servants suggested a long-running close friendship between Mrs Powlett and Lord Sackville. At the inn they were seen in a bedroom with curtains drawn. William Garrow, KC, acted for Mrs Powlett.¹⁰ The *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that Garrow ‘who came from London on a special retainer, made a most eloquent speech for the defendant, for two hours, in which he argued that the Jury could not infer the crime was proved from the evidence produced.’¹¹

Nevertheless, the jury awarded £3,000 for damages – in effect a payment for the diminution in value of Mrs Powlett. By contrast at the same assizes Mr Goldring, a farmer, had a verdict against him for £200 for seducing a Miss Phillips, a farmer’s daughter.

The gutter press quickly tried to profit further. One example was that of John Browne Bell, later founder of *The News of the World*, and his business partner John Decamp, who published a book *The Trial of Lord Sackville for Criminal Intercourse with the Lady of Colonel Powlett; together with the lives of his Lordship and Mrs Powlett, containing... particular Strictures and Animadversions on the alarming increase of Debauchery*. It was advertised in the *Morning Post* of 2nd August 1808 as ‘published this day at 12 o’clock’.

The printer George Smeeton advertised a cheaper account of the trial at the same time ‘embellished with a humorous Scene at the White Hart, Winchester’.¹² The formidable landlady, Mrs Bell, with her bunch of keys, confronts the amorous pair. Mrs Powlett appears anguished and perhaps a little dishevelled – her headdress might be a partly unravelled turban, then fashionable.¹³ The humour seems to depend on the print of the battle of Minden (1759) on the wall above the cowering figure of Lord Sackville. It is a reference to his father (then Lieut. Gen. Lord George Sackville) who failed to lead the cavalry he commanded into that battle

and was court martialled for cowardice. The implication is that Lord Sackville, too, was a coward or perhaps, more bawdily, that he had ‘failed to act’.



Frontispiece of Smeeton's Edition of the Trial Between Colonel T.R. Powlett and The Right Hon. Lord Sackville, for Criminal Conversation with the Plaintiff's Wife; July 28, 1808. (For credit see note 12)

After the Assizes Colonel Powlett succeeded, too, in the ecclesiastical courts but when he undertook the very expensive process of petitioning the House of Lords for an Act of Divorce he failed.¹⁴ The Colonel produced new evidence from a servant as to stains on Mrs Powlett's linen. This was to address the argument, first put by Garrow, that the other evidence did not prove the act of adultery. Mrs Powlett had no barrister, but their Lordships chose not to believe the new witness or to approve the second reading of the act for divorce. The Powletts stayed married (though probably separated) until the then Major General Powlett died at Caversham near Reading on 6th December 1824.

On 22 August 1825 at St Nicholas, Brighton, Laetitia married Thomas Lisle Follett of Lyme, a Barrister of Lincolns Inn. Follett came from a well-established Devon family. He had property in and around Uplyme. He was a gentleman, but not an aristocrat like Powlett or Sackville. Uplyme was a pocket borough under the control of the Earls of Westmorland until the Reform Act of 1832. The Follett family had a history of energetic opposition to the Fane interest which Thomas Lisle Follett continued. He seems also to have been a serious-minded man. His publications include *The origin, science and end of moral truth; or an Exposition of the Inward Principle of Christianity*, and *The Moral Consciousness of Man or Power, Goodness, and Wisdom of God, as manifested by Evidences of Design in our Moral Nature*.

Laetitia must have had a very different sort of life to that of her first marriage.

She lived down the Sackville scandal and hence her tomb bears the inscription that it does. Unlike Maria Rushworth, she had a second spring.

Notes

1. Le Faye, Deidre, ed. *Jane Austen's Letters*, 4th edition, p 137.
2. *Mansfield Park*, Vol. III, Ch. 15
3. *Mansfield Park*, Vol. III, Ch. 17
4. Stratford Canning, (1786-1880), 1st Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, KG GCB PC, a diplomat, was Laetitia's uncle.
5. *Find A Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 02 February 2020), memorial page for Laetitia Mary Perceval Follett, Find A Grave Memorial no. 117235131.
6. *Morning Post*, Tuesday, 21st June 1808.
7. The use of 'Boniface' to denote an innkeeper derives from *The Beaux' Stratagem*, a play by George Farquhar, first staged in London in 1707.
8. *York Herald*, Saturday, 25th June 1808
9. *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday, 6th August 1808
10. Garrow (1760-1840, later the Right Hon. Sir William Garrow) might have been sympathetic to Mrs Powlett because he had had two children with a lady, Sarah Dore, who afterwards became his wife.
11. *Hampshire Telegraph*, Monday, 1st August 1808
12. *Hampshire Chronicle*, Monday, 8th August 1808. *Smeeton's Edition of the Trial Between Colonel T.R. Powlett and The Right Hon. Lord Sackville, for Criminal Conversation with the Plaintiff's Wife; which was Tried at the Winchester Assizes, Before Mr. Baron Graham and a Special Jury, July 28, 1808; Taken in Short Hand.* The image is reproduced by kind permission of The Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and His Circle, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, of which the Curator is Dr. Elizabeth C. Denlinger.
13. I am grateful to Penelope Byrde Ruddock for this suggestion.
14. See the *Journals of the House of Lords*, vol. 47, 1809, for the five days on which the matter was examined between 18th April and 1st June 1809, pp 152-4, 170-4, 277-9, 302-4 and 329.

Jane Austen and Andover

Diana Coldicott



The earliest known drawing of the Market Place (c. 1825 - 1843)
C.J.J. Berry, Old Andover.

Among the many studies featuring Jane Austen and her work are a number of books and booklets devoted to her connection with particular locations. In Hampshire alone these have included Steventon, Chawton, Alton, Winchester and Southampton, as well as the more generic *Jane Austen and Hampshire*.¹ But the Austen family also knew Andover, though admittedly much less well than those other places.

The Revd George Austen and his wife Cassandra spent the first night of their brief honeymoon in Andover after their marriage in Bath in April 1764.² It was a convenient stopping place, fifty miles from Bath and only fifteen from their parsonage house at Deane. From there they moved to the renovated rectory at Steventon in 1771 and rented the surplus house at Deane, most notably in 1789 to clergy widow, Mrs Lloyd, with two unmarried daughters Martha and Mary. Three short years later, the Lloyd ladies were obliged to move out, by which time they and the Austens had become firm friends. Within months, Cassandra and Jane visited their new home at Ibthorpe in the parish of Hurstbourne Tarrant, just north of Andover, from where they attended a ball at Enham Place. The property belonged to the Dewar family, Mrs Dewar being the sister of Anne Mathew, James Austen's first wife.

Like any young girl, Jane Austen remembered her first formal dance. It was, after all, her *début* into local society, but she had also taken a good look at her

fellow guests and eight years later, writing to Cassandra about a ball at Hurstbourne Park, she observed: 'The two Miss Coxes were there; I traced in one the remains of the vulgar, broad featured girl who danced at Enham eight years ago'.³

One wonders about this poor Miss Cox, recalled so critically, and whether she and her sister, although the latter escaped censure, influenced the naming in *Emma* of 'the most vulgar girls in Highbury'.⁴ It is likely that the Hampshire Miss Coxes were daughters of Richard Cox of Quarley House, west of Andover.

An earlier letter of January 1799 makes a passing reference to the town, Jane writing to Cassandra that 'Mr Ludlow & Miss Pugh of Andover are lately married',⁵ but in spring that year she wrote of an actual visit on a journey between Steventon and Bath, following in reverse the same road her parents had taken in April 1764:

Our Journey yesterday went off exceedingly well; nothing occurred to alarm or delay us;—We found the roads in excellent order, had very good horses all the way, & reached Devizes with ease by 4 o'clock.—I suppose John has told you in what manner we were divided when we left Andover, & no alteration was afterwards made.⁶

It is good to know that the turnpike road from London to the west via Overton was 'in excellent order', at least on the stretch that led into Andover. Evidently James Austen's coachman, John Littleworth had driven some of the Bath party on the initial stage of the long journey, entering Andover south of the High Street and maybe into the yard behind the Star and Garter for them to alight, stretch their legs and then obtain some refreshment while he saw to the luggage. We know for certain that Jane went into the Star & Garter before they left for Devizes, because later in the same letter to Cassandra she wrote, 'I put Mary's letter into the Post Office at Andover with my own hand'. At that time Mrs Jane Marcer ran both the inn and the Post and Excise Office within it.⁷

The following year, Jane broke her journey again in Andover on a visit to the Lloyds at Ibthorpe. She had an hour in the town before joining her next coach. As she wrote to her sister, twenty minutes were taken up with a social call, but during the time remaining she took the welcome opportunity to do some shopping:

I spent an hour in Andover, of which Mess^{rs} Painter and Redding had the larger part;—twenty minutes however fell to the lot of M^{rs} Poore & her mother, whom I was glad to see in good looks & spirits.—The latter asked me more questions than I had very well time to answer; the former I beleive is very big; but I am by no means certain;—she is either very big, or not at all big, I forgot to be accurate in my observation at the time, and tho' my thoughts are now more about me on the subject, the power of exercising them to any effect is much diminished.—The two youngest boys only were at home; I mounted the highly-extolled Staircase & went into the elegant Drawing room, which I fancy is now M^{rs} Harrison's apartment;—and in short did everything that extraordinary Abilities can be supposed to compass in so short a space of time ...⁸

Of the two ladies in the elegant drawing room, it was young Mrs Poore who was Jane's friend. The widowed Mrs Harrison lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Philip Henry Poore, who was a surgeon-apothecary and man-midwife in the town. He was a widower with young children when Mary Harrison married him in 1797. She had lived in Overton when James Austen was her father's curate and Jane had described her brother's seeming indecision between choosing this Mary or Mary Lloyd as his second wife: 'Let me know ... which of the Marys will carry the day with my Brother James' was her request to Cassandra in September 1796. 'Give my Love to Mary Harrison,' she ended her letter, indicating that she and Mary were already good friends. The visit to Mary's married home in Andover was evidently Jane's first. As ever, Jane was eagle-eyed at spotting a pregnancy, but as the baby was not due for another six months, the expectant mother can hardly have been 'very big'.

Where in Andover was the Poores' house, with its noteworthy staircase and elegant drawing room? Philip Henry Poore was undoubtedly living at 6 New Street (now the Andover Museum) by 1832, so it has always been assumed that this was the house Jane visited in 1800. Alas, for those of us who have imagined ourselves walking in Jane's footsteps as we mounted the pleasant staircase in the museum; it has now been shown that in 1800 the house was owned and occupied by the then Rector of Linkenholt. Wherever the house was, it must have been well within the town centre, otherwise Jane would not have had time to walk there to pay her twenty-minute call as well as go shopping in Market Place (now the High Street) within the space of an hour. Her letter to Cassandra continues:

Part of the money & time which I spent at Andover were devoted to the purchase of some figured cambric muslin for a frock for Edward—a circumstance from which I derive two pleasing reflections; it has in the first place opened to me a fresh source of self-congratulation on being able to make so munificent a present, & secondly it has been the means of informing me that the very pretty manufacture in question may be bought for 4^s.6^d. p^r y^d—yard & half wide.

One is on safer ground with the two shops that Jane mentioned, thanks to the *Universal British Directory* of 1793, which names both Thomas Painter and Grace Redding among Andover's shopkeepers at that time. Thomas Painter was a haberdasher, so it would have been he or one of his assistants who sold Jane the figured cambric for her little nephew's frock. She did not mention what she bought from Grace Redding, who was a linen and woollen draper in the town. What is clear is that 'Mess^{rs} Painter & Redding' would have told Cassandra exactly which shops her sister visited, showing that both sisters had shopped in Andover before, possibly on their way to Ibthorpe. Their niece Anna Lefroy hinted at an even earlier visit by Cassandra, perhaps to the Star & Garter, when she was very young:

Cassandra in her childhood was a good deal with Dr & Mrs Cooper in Bath – She once described to me her return to Steventon one fine summer evening. The Coopers

had sent or conveyed her a good part of the journey, but my Grandfather had to go, I think as far as Andover to meet her – He might have conveyed himself by Coach, but he brought his Daughter home in a Hack chaise⁹

Just before the Austens' own move to Bath, sprung on Jane on her return from Ibthorpe and the shopping expedition to Painter and Redding *en route*, a passing mention is made in a letter of Henry Rice's 'Lodgings in Andover',¹⁰ but she does not specify where. Only one more reference is made to the town, in a lengthy communication to Cassandra from Lyme dated September 1804. Cassandra had left the seaside resort for Ibthorpe, breaking her long journey at familiar Andover, where Jane hoped she had found the letter, presumably at the Post Office. On Mrs Lloyd's death in 1805, Martha left her home to share a house with the Austen women, in Southampton, then Chawton. The visits to Ibthorpe and breaks in Andover on the way had come to an end.

Notes

1. Audrey Hawkrigde. *Jane Austen and Hampshire*. Hampshire Paper no.6 (1995)
2. Deirdre Le Faye. *Jane Austen A Family Record*. Cambridge: CUP (2004), p.13.
3. Deirdre Le Faye Ed. *Jane Austen's Letters*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: OUP (2011). Letter 27, 20-21 November 1800.
4. Jane Austen. *Emma*. Cambridge: CUP (2005). II 9.
5. Letter 17, 8-9 January 1799.
6. *Ibid*. Letter 19, 17 May 1799.
7. *The Universal Directory* (1793). The inn had been renamed the Star & Garter by Mrs Mercer in 1788. (H.W. Earney. *Inns of Andover*. (1990s) p.18.) Gentrification was attempted in the 1990s with the name changing to the Danebury Hotel, but recently it has once again become the Star & Garter.
8. Letter 28, 30 November - 1 December 1800.
9. Deirdre Le Faye. 'Anna Lefroy's Original Memories of JA'. Cited in *Jane Austen A Family Record*, p.46.
10. Letter 30, 8-9 January 1801.

Is This Jane Austen's Sampler?

Alden O'Brien



A needlework sampler survives with the maker's name Jane Austen stitched within it: is this *the* Jane Austen? Austen experts already have their doubts, and an alternative possible attribution, but I dare to venture into the debate because I bring two relevant skill sets to the question which have not been employed in the discussion so far.

The sampler has a stitched date of 1797, when Jane Austen the novelist would have been twenty-two years old, long past the age of making samplers. (Yes, there are some examples of older women making samplers, but they are rare; in the 1790s, 'our' Jane was writing early versions of *Northanger Abbey*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Sense and Sensibility*.) For this sampler to be plausibly hers, we must suppose that the number 9 may originally have been an 8, and that Austen

pulled out the stitches of the 8 at a later date, to conceal her real age. This is the theory put forward by those considering that this may have been done by author-Jane.

Strangely, no one appears to have asked needlework experts their opinion on this theory. I am a costume and textile historian and curator of costume and textiles, including a collection of samplers and other needlework, at the DAR Museum in Washington, DC, so I've seen my fair share of cross-stitched letters and numerals. Many of the clothes, quilts, and household linens (sheets, tablecloths, etc.) I have worked with in the last twenty-nine years have cross-stitched names or initials, and numbers, like those on samplers. That's why girls made samplers: to learn how to mark the family linens for laundry and inventory. So I'm able to look at the 1797 date and assess whether it's been messed with. There is also some family history/provenance information that accompanied the sampler, but nobody seems to have followed that line of inquiry, either. Genealogy research is a huge part of what I do, so I have done some sleuthing.

The sampler is still in private hands, and has only been on view for one day at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, as part of World Book Day in 2012. Only a very small photo was included with press releases. A close-up of the date shows that the 9 looks a bit funny. Is this typical, or evidence of tampering? Was tampering with the date even done? There absolutely *are* samplers whose stitches were picked to conceal the date of completion, the maker's date of birth or age, or some combination of those facts. Elizabeth Pearson's sampler at the DAR Museum has both her age and the date removed.



Deirdre Le Faye, the premier Austen scholar and expert, doubts the sampler was done by 'our' JA because the idea of her lying about her age seems contrary to her straightforward character. She also mentions the errors in transcribing the Psalm excerpt: would a rector's daughter have made these mistakes? (See

‘Which Jane Austen stitched this sampler?’ *Annual Report* 1999) Those are valid objections. Mine is simply that I don’t see evidence of such tinkering with the stitches: and this is tightly-woven linen which should show evidence even more clearly than the Pearson sampler. Although the 9 seems as if it should extend further diagonally to the left, I do not see evidence of the tightly-woven linen ground being distorted by the previous existence of stitches. In British samplers of this time, 9s extended diagonally down to the left. This Austen sampler is, I think, merely a clumsy attempt to create that numeral in the usual way.



English sampler by Sarah Herbert, 1793, DAR Museum 73.176

I am using a British sampler of a similar date, above, to be sure we are looking at numbers as they would have been made in the same country and time frame; letter and number styles do vary slightly. Consider too Cassandra Austen’s sampler, owned by the Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton.

Cassandra’s 9, like Sarah Herbert’s, extends considerably to the left. The 8 is extremely narrow. Taking the lower right part of the 8 away would not create a plausible 9, and there is no evidence (and no one has suggested) that stitches were added later. It seems unlikely that Jane and Cassandra Austen would have learned different stitch patterns for their numbers. Wouldn’t ‘our’ Jane Austen, if she made a sampler, learn the same numbers as Cassandra? So I’m thinking this really was made in 1797, which casts doubts on the attribution right away.

Now let’s look at the family history that came with the sampler. I spend a great deal of time doing genealogy research to trace the lines from donors to the makers of samplers, and fleshing out, as fully as possible, the facts of the sampler makers’ lives. It seems odd to me that no one interested in the Austen sampler has picked up these threads and investigated this line of research.



Brenda Cox’s blog post on the sampler at Jane Austen’s World records that ‘According to an earlier article that Le Faye refers to, in 1976 the sampler was “owned by a Mrs Molly Proctor, who was given it by Mrs I. Thompson of Rochester, whose grandfather, Mr Frederick Nicholls of Whitstable, was a grandson of a cousin of Jane Austen”’. Can we trace a Mrs I Thompson to a Frederick Nicholls of Whitstable in Kent and go back from Frederick to a grandmother whose cousin was Jane Austen? I originally worked my way both forward and backward from Frederick Nicholls, because he is the one we can most easily trace, but I will sum up what I found by working my way back in time from Mrs Thompson.

In July 1925, Ida M. Woollett married Harry H. Thompson. Ida Mary Woollett was baptized in May, 1900, in the parish of Chatham, Kent, the same county as Frederick Nicholls. Ida was the child of Lena Laura and Edward William Woollett; we can find their marriage in Chatham, too, in 1897. For Ida’s grandfather to be Frederick Nicholls, we need her mother’s maiden name to be Nicholls.

1897 Marriage solemnized at <i>St Mary's Church in the Parish of Whitstable</i> in the County of <i>Kent</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
54	June 19 th 1897	Edward William Woollett	28	Bachelor	Boiler Maker	1 Military Road	Edward Woollett	Letter
		Lena Laura Nicholls	28	Spinster		65 Linton Road	Frederick Nicholls	School Master

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Established Church* by *Frederick Nicholls* or other *Banbury* me.

This Marriage was solemnized between us
Edward W. Woollett and *Lena Laura Nicholls* by *Frederick Nicholls* in the presence of *Annie Louise Jackson* and *Frederick Nicholls*

Lena's maiden name is listed on her marriage certificate as Nicholls. So, the family tree so far is:

Lena Laura Nicholls b. 1868 m. 1897 Edward Woollett

Ida Mary Woollett b. 1900
m. 1925 Harry Thompson

Now – is her father Frederick, since we are hoping to find Ida's grandfather Frederick Nicholls?

Lena's christening record says yes: on 30th August, 1868, in Pitminster, Somerset, Lena Laura was baptized, and her parents were Frederick and Emma (Lynch) Nicholls. In the 1881 census, they all lived in Pitminster, Somerset.

Frederick Nicholls m. Emma Lynch

Lena Laura Nicholls b. 1868 m. Edward Woollett

Ida Mary Woollett b. 1900 m. Harry Thompson

But they are in Somerset, when Frederick is supposed to be from Whitstable, Kent, over 200 miles away. Frederick is indeed in Whitstable in the 1851 and 1861 censuses with his parents, John Hammond Nicholls and Elizabeth Nicholls. In 1861, Frederick was 16 and a 'pupil teacher'. Deirdre Le Faye kindly informs me that 'in 1861 a lower middle class youth of sixteen would not be attending school purely as a scholar. ... Intelligent teenagers were considered perfectly capable of teaching younger children, while perhaps learning a little more, say, commercial arithmetic, themselves, before going on to apprenticeships'. Two of his sisters are listed as 'domestic assistants' and a third is a school mistress.

Their father John is a 'freeman of Oyster fishery'. The National Archives, in its introduction to the Whitstable Oyster Fishery's records, explains: 'The Company of Free Fishers and Dredgers...allowed the 'eldest son of a fisherman at 16 and

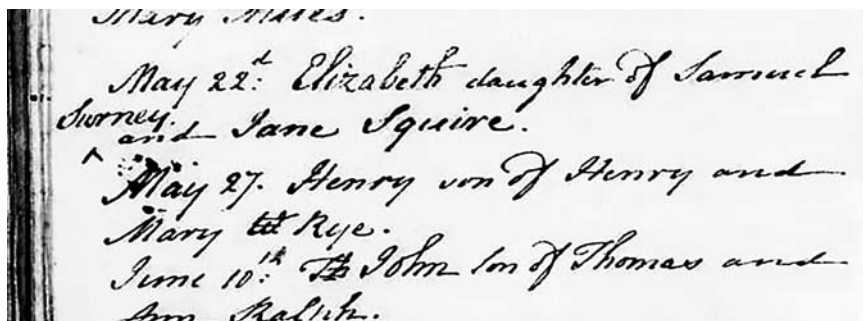
others at 21' to become Freeman, thus bestowing upon them the right to farm oysters'. Oysters, once a poor man's food, have been fished in Whitstable since the Middle Ages; the Whitstable Oyster Fishery company was founded in 1793. It is always interesting to know about the sampler maker's background, but here, it is worth noting the head of the family's occupation; oyster fishermen seem unlikely to have been connected to the author Jane Austen, who came from the lower gentry. As a social historian, however, I am intrigued to see that someone in this class is making a very pretty sampler.

In the census, Elizabeth Nicholls's birthplace is listed as Herne Hill, Kent. An 1829 marriage record gives Elizabeth Nicholls maiden name as Squire. We can now fill in the family tree some more with Frederick's parents' births and marriage:

```

Elizabeth Squire 1804 m.1829 John Hammond Nicholls 1803
    b. Herne Hill      |
    Frederick Nicholls, b. Whitstable, 1845
                m. Emma Lynch
                |
    Lena Laura Nicholls b. 1868 m. Edward Woollett
                |
    Ida Mary Woollett b. 1900 m. Harry Thompson
  
```

Now we need for either John's or Elizabeth's mother to be related to Austen, as we are looking for the 'grandmother of Frederick Nicholls' – this is the sampler generation. Elizabeth's baptism record in Herne Hill in 1804 lists her parents: Samuel Surney (elsewhere in records, Surey or Sarny) Squire and Jane.



Many Mises.

May 22^d Elizabeth daughter of Samuel Surney and Jane Squire.

May 27. Henry son of Henry and Mary the Repe.

June 10th John son of Thomas and Ann Kallish.

Herne Hill church records include the marriage on 12 February, 1803, of Samuel Surney Squire age 26 to Jane AUSTEN, age 18, the daughter of Daniel A. Austen.

No	
Samuel Squire	of [this] Parish
Bachelor	and Jane Austen
of [the]	
Village of Lambeth in the Parish of St. Dunstons	
were	
Married in this [Church] by [Licence]	
This fifteenth Day of February in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred	
and Three by me Richard Hulse Vicar of Lambeth	
This Marriage was solemnized between Us	
In the	Presence of
[Signatures]	

The family history said Frederick's grandmother was a cousin of Jane Austen, not that she was Jane Austen. Knowing Austen never had children, they would have to claim indirect connection to her, not lineal descent. But as we see, Frederick Nicholls's grandmother was in fact a Jane Austen, evidently the sampler maker herself. So here is the family tree from Ida Thompson to grandfather Frederick to his grandmother – Jane Austen:

Jane Austen m. 1803 Samuel Squire [Frederick's grandparents]
 b. ca 1785
 Elizabeth Squire 1804 m. 1829 John Hammond Nicholls b. 1803
 Frederick Nicholls, b. Whitstable, b. 1845 [Ida's grandfather]
 m. Emma Lynch
 Lena Laura Nicholls b. 1868 m. Edward Woollett [Ida's parents]
 Ida Mary Woollett b. 1900 m. 1925 Harry Thompson

The good news: is that we have connected all the dots and confirmed the sampler's oral family history. The bad news is, this is not 'our' Jane Austen. Compare too her signatures to three known signatures by the author: Jane Austen Squire's is the second from the top. The top is from Jane Austen the author's will, the other two are from letters of hers sold recently at auction.

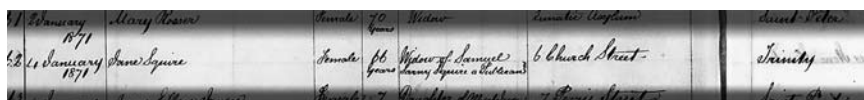
Simple observation shows that 'our' Jane has a large, full loop on her J, and narrower letters; she crosses the capital A with a separate stroke, where Jane A. Squire keeps her pen on the paper to loop



back to cross it. Her lower case letters are rounder and overall the signature has a look of someone who does not write often, or with great ease. I am not including this as conclusive, strong proof of anything, but it is worth noting.

If this Jane married in 1803, she was probably born about eighteen to twenty years previously: 1783 to 1785. She would be twelve to fourteen in 1797, about the right age for making such a sampler. I cannot find a baptismal record for her, nor a definite marriage record for her parents (possibly a 1781 marriage in Canterbury, Kent, of a Daniel Austen to an Ann Bowles, is correct).

What more can we learn about this Jane? Herne Hill baptismal records list Jane and Samuel's children Elizabeth in 1804; Harriet in 1805; Samuel in 1806 and Septima in 1808. Young Samuel is a servant in Herne Hill in the 1851 census; we know Elizabeth married John Nicholls and lived in Whitstable; the others have proved harder to trace. An 1871 death record for Jane, widow of Samuel Sarny Squire, in Maidstone, Kent, lists her age as 66, putting her date of birth at about 1805, which is wildly incorrect. Samuel Sarney Squire is too distinct a name for mistaken identity. Could they have meant she died at age 86, taking us to 1785? Or did Jane Austen Squire die and Samuel remarry another younger Jane? This seems far-fetched. It is definitely not an incorrect transcription:



Why do we care, now we've seen it can't be 'our' Jane Austen? Partly to fill in the gaps and provide further documentation of who she was, but also to establish the social class of the Squires. This death record lists Samuel Sarny Squire as 'a Publican'. A fine fellow I am sure, but a publican, father-in-law of an oyster freeman, was not rubbing elbows with our Austens of Godmersham Park and Chawton House. It is worth adding that it is not far-fetched to suppose that this Jane was making a sampler. A simpler marking sampler with alphabets and numbers would be needed by any young woman who could expect to mark all her family's undergarments, and bed and table linens, with cross-stitched initials and numbers.

It would be wonderful if such a sampler could be ascribed to *the* Jane Austen, since so few artefacts survive which belonged to her. Sadly, however, it seems clear that the family history, carefully passed down, leads us to a different conclusion. Deirdre Le Faye, writing before so many genealogical records were available, put forward the plausible theory that it might have been done by a particular Austen cousin in Kent. With so many digitized records now searchable online, the genealogy clues lead us instead to an entirely different, unrelated Jane of a significantly different social class. It is an interesting object on its own merits, telling a story of the lower middling sort in England at the turn of the nineteenth century, but we need to abandon it as a Jane-Austen-of-Chawton relic.

More than words: the latest addition to the collection of letters at Jane Austen's House

Kathryn Sutherland

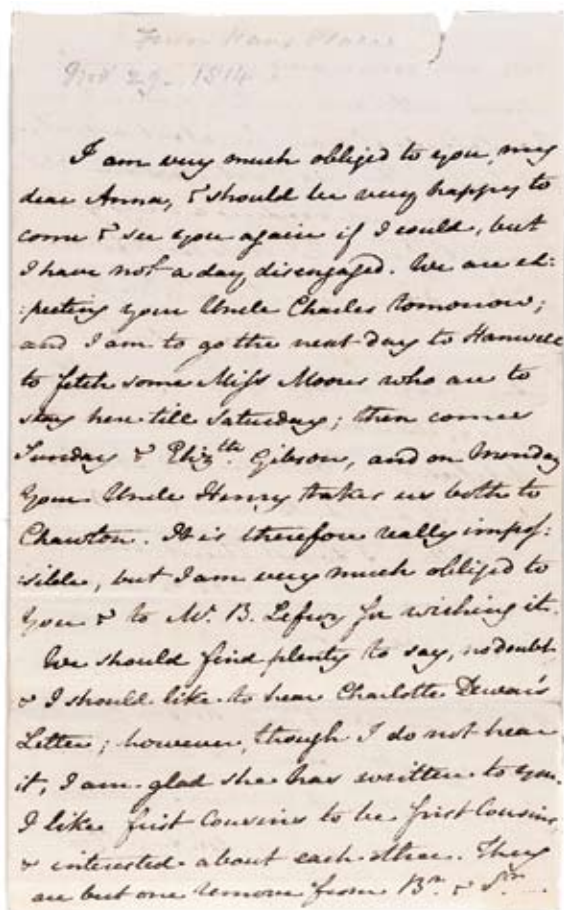
In summer 2019 Jane Austen's House acquired a single leaf, pages 1 and 2 (20 + 20 lines, 281 words), of a standard four-page letter. There is no signature, no date, and no address. An origin-address and date ['From Hans Place | Nov. 29 1814'] have been added in pencil in another hand at the upper edge of page 1. Written in Jane Austen's clear, round hand, the leaf corresponds to the first section and principal portion of Letter 112 in Deirdre Le Faye's authoritative print edition. In it, Austen writes from her brother Henry's home in Chelsea, London. The letter's recipient, Austen's niece, Anna Lefroy, divided it, we think around 1870, into at least five portions: two portions – one no more than a date, the other its closing salutation – were bagged in the twentieth century by the indefatigable autograph hunter Lady Charnwood and are now in the British Library's remarkable Charnwood Collection.¹ Another portion was sold at Sotheby's in 2017 into private hands; yet another remains untraced. Anna's brother, James Edward Austen-Leigh, included an extract in his *Memoir of Jane Austen* (1870), short vertical pencil lines within the text of page 2 showing the section marked up at this time for his use. As printed in modern editions, however, the letter's source is a copy made by Anna's daughter before the original was dismembered.

Apart from a discarded fragment of *Persuasion*, no manuscripts are extant for Jane Austen's famous six novels; we presume they were routinely destroyed once set in print. Her surviving fiction manuscripts (versions of early and unfinished later works) are all, since 2011 and after various adventures and misadventures, in four major institutional collections in Britain and America.² The originals of her letters are far more widely scattered in public and private ownership.

Her letters are the only evidence we have of Jane Austen speaking/writing in her own voice. We know she must have written several thousand: hers was a letter-writing age and, as a dependent female in a large and dispersed family, this was one of her sociable duties. Yet only 161 letters in her hand apparently survived into the late nineteenth century. Cassandra Austen, her sister and chief correspondent, destroyed, in or around 1843, most of those she had received, dividing the 94 she kept as mementoes among brothers, nieces, nephews. Those 161 are available to read in Le Faye's edition. Itself based on editions dating back to 1884 and 1932, it represents a print repository only: several of the originals behind it are now untraceable – lost or destroyed.

Very quickly, Austen's written hand became valuable by its rarity: 'I have hardly ever seen a collection in which Byron is not represented or one in which Jane Austen is', Lady Charnwood noted in 1930.³ Of the holographs (the originals) known to survive, the bulk are in North American institutions, the Morgan Library, New York, having the lion's share; around 30 remain in private ownership (some

of these on deposit in public collections); remarkably few are held, secure for the nation, in British institutions. For example, of 28 pre-1801 letters represented in print, 7 are now untraceable, and only 3 are in British public collections. Though it would not be surprising if those lost letters and others, so far unknown, some day come to light, a letter in Jane Austen's hand remains a rare and precious thing.



I am very much obliged to you, my dear Anna, & should be very happy to come & see you again if I could, but I have not a day disengaged. We are expecting your Uncle Charles tomorrow; and I am to go the next day to Hamwell to fetch some Miss Moore who are to stay here till Saturday; then comes Tuesday & Elizabeth Gibson, and on Monday your Uncle Henry takes us both to Chawton. It is therefore really impossible, but I am very much obliged to you & to Mr. B. Lefroy for wishing it. We should find plenty to say, no doubt. & I should like to hear Charlotte Lefroy's letter; however, though I do not hear it, I am glad she has written to you. I like first Cousins to be first Cousins, & interested about each other. There are but one removed from B. & P.

First page of Jane Austen's letter to Anna Lefroy (probably 1814).

Courtesy of Jane Austen's House.

Does it matter what becomes of originals if we have their words securely locked down in print? Words alone rarely exhaust the interest of a handwritten document. Like preparatory sketches for paintings, manuscript drafts of novels or poems give access to processes of composition and layers of invention and struggle that print erases. Handwritten literary manuscripts are special in their singularity, becoming ever more so with the shift from the written to the electronic word. To the twenty-first-century student, more skilled at thumb texting, key

We all came away very much
pleased with our visit. I assure you.
We talked of you for about a mile
or a half with great satisfaction, & I
have been just sending a very good
account of you to Miss Beckford,
with a description of your Dress for
Susan & Maria. — Your Uncle &
Edw? left us this morning. The
hopes of the former in his Cause, do
not lessen. — We were all at the
Play last night, to see Miss Ome-
ra in Isabella. I do not think she was
quite equal to my expectations. I
fancy I want something more than
can be. Acting seldom satisfies me.
I took two Pocket handkerchiefs, but
had very little occasion for either.
She is an elegant creature however
& hugs Mr. George delightfully. —

Reverse side of Jane Austen's letter

tapping, and page swiping, the mechanical effort exacted from finger and wrist muscles in covering sheet after sheet with handwritten characters appears heroic. Handwriting's digital replacements, e-drafts, can be printed instantly and identically a hundred times from numerous different locations, these copies assuming no hierarchy and no necessary propinquity to an author. By contrast, handwritten and even typed documents remain unique, un-estranged from their moment and place of production. As we leave behind the craft of pen and pencil on paper, those manuscripts we have preserved will assume unanticipated kinds of extraordinariness.

Folded and secret spaces, letters hold more meanings than are confined to their inscriptions. The text of a letter is bound intimately and tightly to its physical form: how carefully or hastily are the words set down; how is the paper filled; how was the letter sent? There is an almost sculptural association of word with space that is disentangled only at the risk of loss. As artefacts, letters carry the trace of their writers. Printed editions, useful for so much, cannot supply these meanings. All

letters now assume a nostalgic status as their protocols shift rapidly from practice into memory, replaced by a variety of electronic messaging services.

Austen's paper archive – fiction manuscripts, letters – is tantalizingly slim, her cultural capital dizzyingly high. Already in the later nineteenth century, Austen commanded an impressive and growing band of devotees to whom these scarce relics were highly marketable. Any fragment, however slight, holds the potential to enlarge our understanding: witness the excitement when, quite recently, a sermon scrap and the unknown closing section of a letter, both in her hand, were rediscovered.⁴

The section of Letter 112 now at Jane Austen's House comprises an opening greeting and continuous text across two pages. 1814 was a significant year in Austen's relationship with its addressee, 21-year-old Anna, who was attempting a novel of her own, under Aunt Jane's encouraging supervision. Earlier in November, Anna had married Ben Lefroy and moved to live in Hendon, a few miles north of London. Written in the wake of a visit to her there, Letter 112 is full of family news and details of Austen's busy social diary: there is no time for another trip to Hendon. It opens 'I am very much obliged to you, my dear Anna'; the fragment ends at the foot of page 2 with the words: '& hugs Mr Younge delightfully'.

As any two pages go, these are rich in information. The letter fits well with others in the House collection, which holds two earlier examples from Austen's visits to London where she stayed with brother Henry, in May 1813 and March 1814. Now, in November 1814, she was there to discuss a second edition of her most recent novel, *Mansfield Park*, with her then publisher Thomas Egerton. The fragment is interesting on family detail (widowed Henry's search for a second wife); on social history (with its insight into how widely letters were communicated – she writes of 'hearing' letters sent to others); and it includes an intriguing comment about 'first Cousins' being 'but one remove from B[rother] & S[ister]'. – which appears to be straight out of *Mansfield Park*. It continues with funny and caustic comments on the actress 'Miss O'neal', who played the lead in David Garrick's *Isabella; or, the Fatal Marriage* (1776), a performance of which Austen had enjoyed at Covent Garden the evening before. Eliza O'Neill, the stage sensation of the day, was known for her raw acting style and celebrated ability to draw sympathy from her audience. Describing O'Neill's Belvidera in Otway's tragedy *Venice Preserv'd* (1682), a few years later, the theatre critic William Hazlitt remarked on her 'tears, sighs, convulsive sobs, shrieks, death-like stupefaction, and laughter more terrible than all' (*The Times*, December 1817). Alas, Austen proved immune to such feeling, reporting to Anna that 'I took two Pocket handkerchiefs, but had very little occasion for either. She is an elegant creature however & hugs Mr Younge delightfully'. And so the fragment ends.

In material terms, the two pages now finding a permanent home at Jane Austen's House are a resilient survival of an act of loving destruction: we might see the dismemberment, scattering, private and public fortunes of Letter 112 as an expression in miniature of the fate of Austen's letters more generally. Their collection and conservation have been at the heart of our mission since the museum

opened 70 years ago in 1949. In the previous year, T. Edward Carpenter, who purchased Austen's former home and oversaw its transformation into a memorial, acquired several Austen letters newly come onto the market – part of the group handed down by Cassandra to their youngest brother Charles. Currently, the House holds thirteen letters in Austen's hand and one in that of Cassandra; they are key to the interpretation of its space as both domestic and a writer's house. We are firmly committed to securing the public future of more letters, where we can, as they come up for sale. But unusual levels of 'author-love' combining with a dearth of objects, means that their market prices can be prohibitively high – all too often beyond the reach of publicly funded museums and literary houses. Yet only public collections have strict standards and duties of conservation towards objects in their care; only public collections maintain our interest in objects that are part of our common literary and cultural heritage. No laws protect significant artefacts in private ownership.

The leaf of Letter 112 was offered to Jane Austen's House at a generous discount by Maggs Bros Ltd, rare book and manuscript dealers. We could do nothing without the support of such enlightened firms and of so many lovers of Jane Austen who contribute to our fundraising campaigns. In a little less than two months in July and August 2019, a public campaign saw more than 250 donors from all over the world raising over £10,000 towards the letter. Jane Austen's House is grateful too for support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Stephen James Charitable Trust, and the Walter Guinness Charitable Trust. Thanks to donations large and small, every one of which is precious and essential to the continuation of our mission, a portion of Letter 112 is now in a public collection, kept safe for us all to enjoy.

Notes

1. *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), No. 112; British Library, Add MS 70949, Charnwood Autograph Collection.
2. The British Library, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; King's College, Cambridge; the Morgan Library, New York.
3. Dorothea Thorpe, Baroness Charnwood, *An Autograph Collection and the Making of It* (London: E. Benn Ltd, 1930), p. 42.
4. The scrap, part of a sermon by James, Austen's eldest brother, is authenticated by Austen-Leigh in an accompanying letter as written in his aunt's hand though not her composition. One of several turned out to appease Victorian autograph hunters, it came into the collection at Jane Austen's House, Chawton, by purchase in 2013. The letter, No. 87 in *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Le Faye, had been missing its closing lines and signature since the nineteenth century, their text unrecorded in print editions. The last six lines (but no signature) turned up in an autograph album auctioned in September 2017 (Daniel Hammond, 'Lost letter airs Jane Austen's dirty linen in public', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 2019).

Jane Austen at the School of Ann Radcliffe

Emma Clery



First edition of The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794). Courtesy of Chawton House.

The film *Becoming Jane* depicts a formative meeting between Jane Austen, the novice writer, and Ann Radcliffe, today noted as a minor novelist in the Gothic mode, but then a *grande dame* of letters, the best paid writer of fiction, ‘the first poetess of romantic fiction’. In the film, the event is a nail in the coffin of young Jane’s budding romance with Tom Lefroy, reinforcing her doubts about the compatibility of writing and marriage, and her conviction that authorship is her overriding aim. The scene is apocryphal, there is no evidence that Austen ever met Radcliffe, but it contains an artistic truth. The romance with Lefroy was just a flash in the pan, but the relationship with Ann Radcliffe herself was to be a lifelong affair, of remarkable intensity.

The real encounter of Austen with Radcliffe is found on the page. As a starting point, take the arrival of Emily St. Aubert at Udolpho, about one third of the way through Radcliffe’s most famous novel. This is the beginning of the Gothic plot proper, and it is marked by a set-piece description of scenery. Emily gazes ‘with melancholy awe’ on the castle belonging to her guardian, the villainous Montoni, taking in ‘the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone,’ briefly lit up by the dying sun.¹ Austen’s would-be heroine Catherine Morland, after an immersive reading of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, nears Northanger Abbey, the residence of the Tilneys, ‘with solemn awe’ expecting

‘every bend in the road...to afford a glimpse of its massy walls of grey stone, rising amidst a grove of ancient oaks, with the last beams of the sun playing in beautiful splendour on its high Gothic windows’. But unfortunately they travel through ‘thick mizzling rain’ and Northanger is built on the flat so they enter its lodge gates ‘without having discerned even an antique chimney’ (NA, II, 5).

The parody is obvious enough. Both passages show the approach to a Gothic building through the eyes of an anxious young woman. Udolpho is sublimely elevated, Northanger Abbey is hopelessly, bathetically, low. But Austen’s attention to the Radcliffe lexicon is precise and there is an element that is genuinely uncanny. Radcliffe says, ‘walls of dark grey stone.’ Austen says ‘walls of grey stone’. This isn’t the sort of wording to be remembered. Austen has *The Mysteries of Udolpho* open in front of her as she writes. Our eyes are travelling over exactly the same line from Radcliffe which hers travelled over more than 200 years ago, in the very act of composition.

This is something different than the broad-brush, knockabout parody so often directed at the ‘Radcliffe School’ in the 1790s. This is *parody as close reading*, conducted with a curious sort of reverence for the source text. Moreover, both passages appear in Volume II, Chapter 5; another *frisson* of the uncanny; perhaps another small homage from Austen to Radcliffe. Austen, like her hero Henry Tilney, is a very attentive reader of Radcliffe. Henry knows his ‘Julias and Louisas’ as well as his muslins, and can whip up a pseudo-Radcliffian plotline effortlessly to while away the time on the journey to Northanger (NA I, 14). The point of this episode is not only to show Catherine’s childlike absorption, but also Henry’s remarkable mastery of the conventions laid down by Radcliffe; a mastery that is also Austen’s.

Many critics have been prepared to entertain the idea that there is a quantum of tribute to the powers of Radcliffe in *Northanger Abbey*. Yet the general notion is that by invoking Radcliffe parodically, Austen is killing her off. She is saying, the boundary lies here; I am not *that* sort of novelist. Radcliffe is after all not included alongside her sister novelists, Burney and Edgeworth, in Austen’s grand vindication of the novel as a literary form, when the narrator of *Northanger Abbey* steps in to defend against detractors ‘works in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature’, etc., is ‘conveyed to the world in the best chosen language’ (NA I, 5). Instead, we are told at the moment of Catherine’s disillusionment, ‘Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe’s works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for’ (NA II, 10). By the standard of probability they must be judged unnatural. It follows that although Radcliffe may be partially redeemed as light entertainment by the enthusiasm of Henry Tilney, a man of sense, essentially her novels are associated with claptrap at worst, and the rejected world of romance at best. For a time Catherine imagines that her host, the autocratic General Tilney, capable of murdering his wife, or at the very least keeping her secretly imprisoned in the style of *A Sicilian Romance*. But she is rudely disabused. ‘The visions of romance were over’ says Austen of her

heroine, and it's as if she herself is renouncing Radcliffe's realm of imagination (NA II, 10).

This idea was forcefully developed by Virginia Woolf in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1925, marvelling at Austen's precocious juvenile burlesques:

One of those fairies who perch upon cradles must have taken her a flight through the world directly she was born. When she was laid in the cradle again she knew not only what the world looked like, but had already chosen her kingdom. She had agreed that if she might rule over that territory, she would covet no other.²

There will be a strict boundary, Woolf goes on. Austen sees that 'moons and mountains and castles exist,' but they, along with 'vice and adventure', exist 'on the other side'.³

Subsequently there has been a backlash. There is now many a Radcliffean reading of Austen's novel, observing that Gothic suggestions return by the back door. A moment of crisis occurs when the General mysteriously and despotically announces that Catherine will be turned out of doors at first light, and this time her distress is for real. Catherine is now engaged in 'the contemplation of actual and natural evil' (NA II, 13), and when she learns of the General's mercenary designs on her and his violent reaction to their disappointment she concludes that by suspecting him 'of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty' (NA II, 15). There is the shadow of irony here, but enough substance to warrant Claudia Johnson's question in the Introduction to a recent edition, 'Is Austen possibly a Gothic novelist herself?'.⁴

Yet the question of Radcliffe's influence on Austen must not be reduced to matters of content along the lines of, 'Is General Tilney another Montoni or is he not?', because Radcliffe's realm was far more extensive than Virginia Woolf was willing to admit. Moons and mountains and castles form part of it; so do vice and adventure. However it contains much else besides. Austen may have resisted and resented certain aspects of the fiction of Radcliffe, and attempted to neutralise them with satire, but she continues to learn from and absorb the innovations that set Radcliffe apart from the Gothic crowd and indeed from any other novelist of the period. Austen was the greatest of Radcliffe's followers and the study of her work can lead to a better appreciation of the achievement of Radcliffe.

There is a work by Caspar David Friedrich, 'Woman Before the Setting Sun', that was painted in 1818, the date of the publication of *Northanger Abbey*, and is suggestive of Austen's relation to Radcliffe and the world of fictional experimentation she represented, beyond the bounds of narrative realism as it then existed. Austen seems to invoke Radcliffe as the 'horizon of expectations' (to apply the term of the literary theorist Hans Robert Jauss), in order to 'destroy it step by step'.⁵ Catherine is not a romance heroine; the norms of Udolpho are not those of 'the midland counties of England.' But at the same time Radcliffe is established as the pervasive limit case of reading and writing, the extremity



Woman Before the Setting Sun (1818-20) by Caspar David Friedrich.

of what can be seen and known in fiction. Austen is a reader before she is a writer, and the experience of reading Radcliffe continues to shape her writing. Among all the novelists of the time, there was something unique about Radcliffe, a radical unfamiliarity at the level of form as well as content, which set her apart from respectable forerunners who could be openly cited as models: Burney and Edgeworth, or Richardson and Fielding. She was the influence who could not be named, partly because she was read so obtusely by others.

As a response to Radcliffe, *Northanger Abbey* is necessarily incomplete. It only takes into account that section most readily identified under the heading ‘Gothic,’ perhaps a third of *Udolpho*. But the primary mode of Radcliffe is different – gently dreamlike, ‘pensive,’ involving complications of the boundary between objective and subjective, and subtle enigmas that spread like ripples on the water. To this more extensive style of writing Austen responds in her first published work, *Sense and Sensibility*. Together the novels constitute a preliminary, two-part, answer to Radcliffe.

If *Northanger Abbey* is Austen’s parodic reply to Radcliffe that simultaneously acknowledges and disavows her power, *Sense and Sensibility* is a serious work of apprenticeship, in which Austen adopts the question that Radcliffe had sought to answer. The relationship of sense to sensibility is the problem set in *A Sicilian Romance*, another tale of two sisters, and followed through in *The Romance of the Forest* to its clearest articulation in *Udolpho*. Emily is told by her father that she must learn to restrain her sensibility but the ordeals both of them undergo

demonstrate that this is ultimately impossible, and even undesirable. What is crucial is the struggle: the effort to surpass first impressions and natural reactions generates an inner heroism and, to use the idiom of the time, the 'dignity of an elevated mind' (*MU*, 49). Yet sensibility persists, and gives 'sense' a moral value. Without sensibility, sense is cold, static, and worthless. Marianne, in *Sense and Sensibility*, lives with the suspicion that her own sister, her other self, has become a creature of narrow sense, estranged to her. Elinor fears that Marianne is entertaining sensibility exclusively to a degree that may lead to ruin, insanity and death.

The greatest wonder investigated in Radcliffe's fiction is the mind, with its capacity to filter perception through a constantly changing kaleidoscope of impulses, and alter it through the prolific generative powers of imagination. Faced with this remarkable phenomenon, Austen, far from experiencing a consolidation of her stable difference from Radcliffe, is periodically unhinged, taken out of herself, and led to design aspects of her fictional world and its protagonists along subtly phantasmatic lines. It is Radcliffe who allows her to see fiction as a voyage and an adventure beyond the horizon, and to turn away from the temptation to stay within the limits of literary realism as it then existed.

In the essay, 'The Spectralization of the Other in *Mysteries of Udolpho*,' the critic Terry Castle argues that in Radcliffe's *magnum opus* the 'before' and 'after' sections framing the 'Gothic core' are not, as had been assumed, 'ordinary, domestic, and uninteresting', a mere foil to suggestions of the sublime and uncanny.⁶ On the contrary it's in these framing sections that we find the strangest and most consequential effects. What Castle calls Radcliffe's 'spectralized' language is ineradicably haunted by death and absence. The 'spectralization of the other' represents a 'new obsession with the internalized images of other people.'⁷ Places are inhabited by memories of the missing, living characters are mistaken for apparitions, intense yearning can result in the sudden appearance of a distant loved one. On the basis of this perception, Castle makes some major historical claims. '*Udolpho* was more than simply fashionable; it encapsulated new structures of feeling, a new model of human relations, a new phenomenology of self and other'. It was 'one of the charismatic texts of late eighteenth-century European culture...because it articulated a new and momentous perception of human experience', like Rousseau's *Julie ou la Nouvelle Heloise* or Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which had 'a similar shaping influence on contemporary psychic life'.⁸

One central trope identified by Terry Castle in Radcliffe's representation of the everyday is that characters in *Udolpho* 'mirror, or blur into one another'.⁹ This is what we see occurring in *Sense and Sensibility*. The inset narrative related by Colonel Brandon gives rise to a series of vulnerable young women, the first Eliza, the second Eliza, and Marianne, who become interchangeable in his mind. Marianne also, problematically, resembles her mother. There is the doubling effect created by the two sisters and their parallel affairs of the heart, which is then redoubled by the Steele sisters, and then distantly again in caricature mode by Lady Middleton and Mrs Palmer. Three brothers disinherit their siblings, and two

of them steal their fiancées. Three of the male characters are christened 'John'. Marianne mistakes Edward from a distance for Willoughby and Elinor mistakes a lock of Lucy Steele's hair for her own.¹⁰ Nothing comparable can be found in *Northanger Abbey*. Austen is allowing into her comedy of manners and social mores some of the dreamlike quality generated by this overlapping of identities as a facet of the plot, a narrative resource derived from Radcliffe.

The erosion of distinct identities within the narrative is one lesson learned at the school of Radcliffe. Another is the innovative overlapping of identities as a matter of narrative technique. Austen's pioneering use of free indirect discourse has long been celebrated: this is when the voice of the narrator and the voice of a character merge in the text to produce a hybrid voice, which has some of the authority of narration, and some of the personality and vivid quality of an actor in the narrative. Used for satirical purposes, it can involve mimicry of the habits of speech of a ludicrous character by the narrator, outside speech marks. A celebrated instance of this can be found in the second chapter of *Sense and Sensibility*, in the course of John Dashwood's conversation with his wife Fanny regarding his obligations to his bereaved stepmother and half-sisters.

Another, quite different form of the dual voice occurs when the narrator enters the mind of a character, usually the heroine in Austen's case, to share her thoughts and point of view, in a way which is generally sympathetic and non-ironic. This technique creates a shimmering effect in the language, now subjective, now objective, at once inner and outer. Although fully-fledged examples of the device are relatively rare in Radcliffe, what she does is to generate an intense focus on scenes and events by way of the inner life of the heroine. One could say Radcliffe indicated the *need for a fluid free indirect discourse*; a necessity to which Austen would respond.

An example of Radcliffe's method occurs near the start of *Udolpho*, when Emily returns alone to her home at La Vallée, following the death of her father M. St Aubert.

As she drew near the chateau, these melancholy memorials of past times multiplied. At length, the chateau itself appeared amid the glowing beauty of St. Aubert's favourite landscape. This was an object which called for fortitude, not for tears; Emily dried hers, and prepared to meet with calmness the trying moment of her return. 'Yes,' said she, 'let me not forget the lessons he has taught me! How often he has pointed out the necessity of resisting even virtuous sorrow; how often we have admired together the greatness of a mind, that can at once suffer and reason! O my father! If you are permitted to look down upon your child, it will please you to see, that she remembers, and endeavours to practise, the precepts you have given her.' (MU, 92).

Emily spends a great deal of time meditating alone, and the novel contains many of these soliloquies. The phrase 'This was an object which called for fortitude, not for tears' is on the verge of free indirect discourse. Because of the emphatic 'This' at the start, one could almost imagine that the view of her home is prompting an

inner pep talk, although the idiom of the statement is formal. The device used next, of representing thoughts as speech complete with speech marks and somewhat stilted rhetoric, is awkward, but one can see what Radcliffe is aiming at. She wants to convey the intensity of Emily's inward feeling, in all its spontaneity, mixing and mingling in a single paragraph with the objective reality that inspires it. The result has something of the quality of a haunting that Terry Castle describes: the ghostly transposition of self onto objects, and vice versa.

Austen handles precisely the same narrative situation, the depiction of grief at the death of a father in a passage near the start of *Sense and Sensibility*. Control of emotions is an ethical imperative for individuals, Austen like Radcliffe indicates, not simply a social lubricant. At the same time the narrator wants us to recognise that her main protagonist, Elinor Dashwood, is not without feeling and that her self-control comes at a cost. Preparatory conceptual work is done in a pen portrait of Elinor. She has 'strength of understanding' and 'coolness of judgement', but is also 'affectionate and her feelings were strong' (*S&S* I,1). Yet Austen wants to bring us closer, to give us an insight into how it *feels* to be Elinor, resisting the emotional self-indulgence of her mother and sister and marshalling her own feelings, not just preach to us from the position of an omniscient narrator.

This is where free indirect speech comes in. Without fanfare, the perspective switches to take us inside Elinor's mind, while still keeping the appearance, the grammatical markers, of a third person narration. The change is signalled appropriately enough by a verb that indicates point of view, 'saw':

Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister's sensibility; but by Mrs. Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. She could consult with her brother, could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival, and treat her with proper attention; and could strive to rouse her mother to similar exertion, and encourage her to similar forbearance. (*S&S* I,1)

This passage, related by the narrator, is infused with Elinor's subjective viewpoint to form a kind of 'psycho-narration'.¹¹ The problem of how to deal with grief, her own and others, is evidently something that she mulls over constantly, to the point of obsession. The thudding repetition of 'was' in the third sentence betrays her state of raw irritation. The language describing the emotional performances of others – the 'violence of their affliction', the 'agony of grief' – is derived from *her* thought processes, based on *her* observations and responses. The temporality of this paragraph is interesting, too. It is a condensed account of something that happens 'again and again,' a summary of frequent recurrences of the 'agony of grief'. Because of the introduction of the word 'saw' at the start it's clear that this replaying of the outbursts of Mrs Dashwood and Marianne is taking place

in Elinor's head. And Elinor's effort to resist this collapse into emotion is also represented as a repeated trial, mainly through the repetition of the word 'could'; five times in two sentences. The 'could' is performative – we actually *sense* the effort in action. *Thinking* it is Elinor's enabling condition for *doing* it. We need to read those 'coulds' as if in italics, not as a neutral description by the narrator, but as a will to action on Elinor's part.

Then the narration reverts: there's no sign of Elinor's consciousness in the next paragraph. The narrative goes from 'story' – vivid and unfolding – to 'history,' the recounting of past events by an omniscient observer. We suddenly pass from a dynamic 3-D effect, to 2-D. The method of combining third person narration and the inner perspective of a character is a form of story-telling magic. Austen in *Northanger Abbey* may laugh at some of the most formulaic and frequently imitated aspects of Radcliffe's Gothic, but when it comes to the subtler attributes of the Radcliffe narrative style and the internal struggle between emotion and reason in the Radcliffean heroine, she returns to the source compulsively. This is particularly clear in *Sense and Sensibility*, where the title itself announces that it emerges from the paradigm established in the early chapters of *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Pride and Prejudice, which takes *its* title from a phrase in a novel by Frances Burney, could be regarded as the exception that proves the rule. Here one gets the sense that Austen was deliberately and determinedly turning her back on Radcliffe. Yet a well-known remark in a letter to her sister Cassandra – that the novel is 'rather too light & bright & sparkling; – it wants shade', though playful, also suggests that the influence persisted.¹² This is borne out by the surprising change of direction with her third published novel, *Mansfield Park*.

Shade-loving Fanny Price has arguably the best claim to be described as a *bona fide* Radcliffe-style heroine. Where Catherine is obtuse when faced with the beauties of nature, and Marianne is mocked for her rhapsodic passion for dead leaves and muddy valley bottoms, Fanny is allowed a genuine and sensitive love of scenery. With *Mansfield Park*, just as Catherine learned to love a hyacinth, Austen submits, and learns to allow her heroine to love trees as they do at La Vallée. Fanny's lament at hearing that the avenue at Sotherton is to be chopped down to make way for picturesque improvements echoes not only the poet William Cowper in *The Task*, but also M. St Aubert's response in *Mysteries of Udolpho* to the news that his narrow-minded brother-in-law wants to dispose of the trees that 'encumber' his ancestral estate, including a particularly ancient chestnut, because they 'interrupt my prospects' (*MU*, 13). Star-gazing and meditations on memory and the passage of time in a shrubbery further enhance Fanny's credentials.

Even more remarkable in *Mansfield Park* is the way in which Austen returns to the Gothic; the uniquely subtle variety of Gothic pioneered by Radcliffe, involving memory, unnameable dread, and synaesthesia. Towards the end of the novel Fanny is exiled to Portsmouth, the scene of her childhood, having angered Sir Thomas Bertram by her refusal to accept a proposal of marriage from Henry Crawford. She is dismayed by the squalor and noise of her family home, compared

to the luxurious tranquillity to which she had become accustomed at Mansfield. Her feelings are wound up to a hysterical degree.

The living in incessant noise was to a frame and temper, delicate and nervous like Fanny's, an evil which no super-added elegance or harmony could have entirely atoned for. It was the greatest misery of all. At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; every body's feelings were consulted. (*MP* III, 9)

What Austen is describing, with her inimitable touches of ironic free indirect discourse, is a false memory. Here, in Fanny's enervated mind, the small house in Portsmouth takes on the terrifying and bewildering aspect of the castle of Udolpho, infested with *banditti*. Mansfield by contrast is a haven of peace. The narrator has shown us otherwise, however. Mansfield has been the scene of terror, in ways that specifically relate to Fanny's hyperbolic train of thought in this passage. The phrase 'tread of violence' signals the forgetting and mental repetition of another episode: the sudden return of Sir Thomas from plantation in Antigua in the middle of a transgressive play rehearsal.

Volume two of *Mansfield Park* begins with the lines: 'How is the consternation of the party to be described? To the greater number it was a moment of absolute horror'. There is collective panic; 'every other heart was suggesting "What will become of us? What is to be done now?"' It was a terrible pause; and terrible to every ear were the corroborating sounds of opening doors and passing footsteps' (*MP* II, 1). By Austen's standards this is a scene of quite extraordinary violence, and it is as if reactivated in displaced form by the 'bursting' of men and boys into the tiny front room in Portsmouth (*MP* III, 7). The repetition involves a forgetting which is apparent to the reader, but what is equally striking is the misremembering of Mansfield Park's silence.

In Portsmouth, Fanny thinks of the 'elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony – and perhaps, above all, the peace and tranquillity of Mansfield'. This recollection is an obliteration of her original experience of silence *as* violence. Fanny is the only Austen heroine depicted in childhood, and it is as if that were done specifically in order to allow us to trace back to the point of origin the misprision of the 'tread of violence' referred to at the end. Fanny is uprooted at the age of ten from her impoverished but loving and secure home and set down in a mausoleum. For when Fanny first arrived at Mansfield, it was the silence of the place that oppressed her. She is 'disheartened' by Lady Bertram's silence, awed by Sir Thomas's 'grave looks'. We are told that she is 'astonished,' as if turned to stone, by the stillness and grandeur of the house; she 'creeps about in constant terror' but her 'quiet passive manner' betrays nothing (*MP* I, 2). She is numbed in the manner typical of victims of trauma at the time of the event. There are echoes here of Emily exploring Udolpho in the stillness of night, expecting to find a dead body at every turn, and sometimes doing so. Here the scenario is adapted to

generate a remarkable psychological realism.

In Fanny's early childhood, noise was the homely, the familiar, and it is the repetition of the noise at Portsmouth that leads to her misrecognition of the pain it causes, attributed to the immediate setting, rather than to Mansfield Park. Critical work has been done on the dramatic use of space in this novel, but not to my knowledge the soundscape. Space, sound, terror and the tricks of memory: all these are part of the new horizon of fictional possibilities that Radcliffe had so brilliantly established.

Austen, as if unable to sustain the full glare of Radcliffe's influence, seems in her next novel, *Emma*, to resort again, as in *Northanger Abbey*, to the renunciation implied by open satire. It is silly Harriet Smith who recommends *The Romance of the Forest* to her suitor Robert Martin. Meanwhile the heroine Emma is a romantic fantasist who must be humbled. Yet romance will not be kept out.

With *Persuasion*, even Virginia Woolf can see the impossibility of maintaining the strict division between the realm of 'moons, mountains, and castles' and Jane Austen's chosen domain. She observes that we 'feel it to be true of herself' when the narrator remarks in the novel of Anne Elliot, 'She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older...'.¹³ But what does it mean to say that Anne has 'learned romance'? In this passage, the lesson is defined as the coming round to 'the side of early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity,' putting aside doubts that exertion will find a way and Providence will deliver (*Pers* I, 4). The lesson is taught in every one of Radcliffe's novels. For instance, in *Udolpho*, Emily too errs on the side of what she mistakenly thinks is caution. True, she's then carried off to a ruined fortress in Italy by a vicious warlord, and that is slightly different from Anne's subjection to the affronts meted out by her unpleasant father and sister, but there are similarities to be traced in the regrets and disappointments that are so prominent in Emily's long, long journey towards a happy ending. Interestingly, in these narrow terms, we've seen romance in Austen before, in the conclusions of *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*, the two novels in closest dialogue with Radcliffe. Catherine and Henry, Elinor and Edward, throw caution to the wind, and marry in spite of parental opposition and a potential lack of means.

If incautious marriage is not new in Jane Austen, then what might it mean to say that she herself 'learned romance as she grew older'? 'Romance' could mean something broader. Free indirect discourse is used more extensively and fluidly than ever before, and Anne Elliot is the ultimate instance of the eternal return to the problematic established by Radcliffe: the internal dialectic of sense and sensibility. The sense of place is further enhanced: weather and the change of season are sometimes felt within, not shrugged off externally. There is a thickening of the atmosphere in *Persuasion* that is unmistakably Radcliffian. The story is told through the medium of gentle melancholy and quiet meditation in a way that is as much a part of Radcliffe's art as Gothic terror. The inclusion of poetry within prose fiction and the lyrical depiction of nature were Radcliffe innovations. In *Persuasion* we are given two memorably atmospheric days in November: the

first involves a walk from Uppercross to Winthrop through fields and hedge-rows then, in the next chapter, Lyme Regis, a seaside town out of season. This seasonal placement of the narrative action is fundamentally indebted to Radcliffe's radical incorporation into fiction of the most famous poem of the eighteenth century, James Thomson's *The Seasons*, which she cites constantly in epigraphs, quotes in the body of the text, and through allusion. Like Adeline in *Romance of the Forest*, Anne takes poetry on her nature rambles, 'repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn...that season which has drawn from every poet'. Austen injects irony into the scene and continues to struggle with Radcliffe's influence, but does not negate it.

This distinctive emotional penumbra is the element in Radcliffe that is most powerfully 'charming,' as Austen once put it (*NA* II, 10), and it has been wonderful to witness the way in which these charms have been brought back into circulation in the last three decades. Until the late 1980s, only *Mysteries of Udolpho* was in print. Now all of her novels are readily available in paperback, some in multiple editions, and she was honoured with a Cambridge University Press collection of essays, *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* in 2014, to mark the 250th anniversary of her birth. The time is ripe for reassessment of the author Walter Scott described as 'the first poetess of romantic fiction.'¹⁴ She was integral to the shaping of a Romantic world-view, and as popular in France and Germany as in Britain. Hazlitt spoke for many when he declared that 'part of the impression with which I survey the full-orbed moon shining in the blue expanse of heaven, or hear the wind sighing through autumn leaves, or walk under the echoing archways of a Gothic ruin, is owing to repeated perusal of the *Romance of the Forest* and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*'.¹⁵ For Keats, she was 'Mother' Radcliffe, in recognition of her status as a literary matrix.¹⁶

The story of generative meeting-ground of Austen and Radcliffe could end with *Persuasion*, but mention should be made of *Sanditon*, Austen's last, unfinished work. At first there appears little to relate it to Radcliffe. This is in many ways Austen's most deliberately modern work, a tale of speculative building at a coastal resort aspiring to fashion. The place is mainly peopled with comic grotesques: Mr Parker, full of plans and bustle, and his relations, a band of cheerful hypochondriacs. We are guided through the narrative by the heroine Charlotte Heywood, but given very little of her inner life; no struggles with sensibility for her. But then there is Lady Denham, the autocratic and grasping matriarch of Sanditon, and her mysterious downtrodden penniless niece Miss Clara Brereton, looking like 'the most perfect representation of whatever Heroine might be most beautiful and bewitching,' just stepped out of a circulating library novel.

There is also Sir Edward Denham whose tastes and ideas about life have, by his own account, been formed by acolytes of Radcliffe, and in particular those influenced by her most finished characterisation of villainy in her final novel, *The Italian*; works offering 'Portraits of high Conceptions, Unbounded Views, illimitable Ardour, indomptible Decision'. 'The Novels which I approve,' he declares to Charlotte in a speech covering two printed pages, 'are such as display

Human Nature with Grandeur – such as shew her in the Sublimities of intense Feeling – such as exhibit the progress of a strong Passion from the first Germ of incipient Susceptibility to the utmost Energies of Reason half-dethroned....’ Charlotte replies curtly, ‘If I understand you aright...our taste in Novels is not at all the same’ (*Sandition* 8). Austen is at this stage determined to keep Radcliffe at a satirical distance, but the exchange also demonstrates that Radcliffe was the writer, perhaps above all others, whom she kept in view to the very last, and it appears that she was preparing to present a portrait of villainy herself, initiated by a carefully described ‘Unbounded View’.

Charlotte walks to Sanditon House to visit Lady Denham on a misty morning. A passage follows tantalising the reader before the narrative breaks off: ‘The Fence was a proper Park paling in excellent condition’ but ‘there were vacant spaces – and through one of these, Charlotte as soon as they entered the Enclosure, caught a glimpse over the pales of something White and Womanish in the field on the other side’ (*Sandition* 12). Straining her vision through the mist, she discerns Sir Edward in close discussion with Clara.

The phrase ‘White and womanish’ suggests that Austen was about to provide the missing link between *Mysteries of Udolpho* and Wilkie Collins. The palings, on the other hand, bring to mind the strictures of another Charlotte, Charlotte Brontë, on Austen’s shortcomings. ‘An accurate daguerrotyped portrait of a commonplace face,’ she ranted of *Pride and Prejudice* to G.H. Lewes, ‘a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers...’.¹⁷ But here the fence has an opening, there are ‘vacant spaces,’ spaces allowing for mystery, wonder and suspense – in this case a suspense that, because of the story’s unfinished state, can never end.

One could think of this episode from *Sandition*, this ‘Unbounded View,’ as a last meeting, a farewell to the novels of Ann Radcliffe, and a testament to their endless powers of attraction and, at the same time, repulsion. Austen had written to James Stanier Clarke: ‘I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life’.¹⁸ She refused to write romance in earnest, even as she lay dying. But her thoughts continued to turn in the final days to that horizon.

Notes

1. Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée, intro. Terry Castle. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), II, v, 226-7. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses in the main text, after the abbreviation MU.
2. Virginia Woolf, ‘Jane Austen,’ In *The Common Reader: First Series*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 136.
3. *Ibid.*, 140, 137.
4. Claudia Johnson, Introduction, *Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sandition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. ix. See also Nancy Armstrong, ‘Gothic Austen,’ in *A Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Claudia L.

Johnson and Clara Tuite (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 237-47.

5. Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982) 24.
6. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: 18th-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press) 121-2.
7. *Ibid*, 124, 125.
8. *Ibid*, 125.
9. *Ibid*, 126.
10. For an interesting approach to the subversion of identities in this novel see Susan C. Greenfield, 'Moving In and Out: The Property of Self in *Sense and Sensibility*,' in *Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Johnson and Tuite, 91-100.
11. The term is used by Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1978).
12. JA to Cassandra Austen, 4 Feb 1813; *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 3rd Edition (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1995) 203, Letter 80.
13. Woolf, 'Jane Austen,' 144.
14. Walter Scott, 'Prefatory Memoir to Mrs Ann Radcliffe,' In *The Novels of Mrs Ann Radcliffe [...]. To Which is Prefixed, a Memoir of the Life of the Author. Novelist's Library*, Vol. X. (London, 1824) iv.
15. William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (London, 1819) 250.
16. John Keats to George Keats, 14 Feb. 1819: "In my packet I shall send you the Pot of Basil, St. Agnes eve, and if I should have finished it a little thing called 'Eve of St. Mark'—you see what fine Mother Radcliffe names I have—it is not my fault—I did not search for them"; *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958) p. 286.
17. Charlotte Brontë to G.H. Lewes, 12 Jan 1848; Brian Southam, ed. *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968) 126.
18. JA to James Stanier Clarke, 1 April 1816; *Jane Austen's Letters*, 312, Letter 138(D).

This article originated in a plenary paper delivered at the anniversary conference on Ann Radcliffe at University of Sheffield, and was developed in a talk given at the annual Jane Austen Society Study Day. My thanks to Angela Wright and Maureen Stiller for these opportunities to develop ideas stimulated by a long-running course I taught as part of the MA programme at University of Southampton. I'm grateful to all the students who took part in lively discussions of Jane Austen's dialogues with other writers in 'Unknown Jane Austen' 2005-2013, renamed 'Jane Austen's Style' 2017-2019.

Sir Thomas More and Jane Austen

Ronald Dunning

Sir Thomas More needs little introduction. As King Henry VIII's Lord High Chancellor from October 1529 to 16 May 1532, he played a central role in what some historians consider to have been the second most significant event in England's history after the Battle of Hastings, the break from the authority of the Roman papacy, to facilitate Henry's divorce from Catharine of Aragon. He lost his head for his principled opposition, for which he was canonised by Pope Pius XI on 17 May 1935.



The Dawtrey Tomb at St Mary's Church, Petworth.

Sir Thomas's memory has been kept alive by Robert Bolt's stage play and 1966 film, *A Man For All Seasons*, and by Hilary Mantel's more recent *Wolf Hall*. Neither the historical record nor the dramatisations record his descendant lines to any extent, but Sir Thomas and his wife Jane Colt established a fertile line of progeny. A genealogist and descendant, the late Martin Wood, estimated in his book *The Family and Descendants of St Thomas More*,¹ that the tally so far could number one hundred thousand.

What has certainly never been on the public record is a family connection between Sir Thomas and Jane Austen. The link was in the maternal line of Mrs. Austen, Cassandra Leigh, through her great-grandmother Anne Dawtrey. The only personal detail recorded for Anne, confirmed in the licence allegation for her marriage to James Perrott (dated 23 November, 1667)² stated that she was 'of Petworth' in Sussex. The Dawtreys revealed themselves to have been a long-established Petworth family, with additional estates in Essex and Suffolk. They left Wills that are preserved at The National Archives;³ and bore Arms (heraldic Arms), so their pedigree is recorded in the Sussex County Visitations. Working through the Wills and Visitations, I was able to establish and verify Anne's lineage back to her great-great grandfather William Dawtrey, who had been elected MP for Sussex in 1563 and died in 1591, and whose wife was Margaret.

Margaret's surname was recorded as Rogers in the Visitations of Sussex for 1530 and 1633 -34.⁴ William's biography on the website of The History of Parliament corrected the name to Roper – she was the daughter of William Roper of Eltham, Kent.⁵ William Roper had married Margaret More, Sir Thomas's daughter and was one of Sir Thomas's early biographers. Margaret More, his devoted daughter, supported him through his trial and retrieved his head from the executioner. It is now interred in the Roper vault under the Chapel of St. Nicholas in St. Dunstan's church, Canterbury.

Sir Thomas More's parents, Sir John More, a Judge of the Common Pleas and of the King's Bench, and Alice Graunger, had four surviving children, of whom he was the second eldest. His youngest sibling, Elizabeth, married John Rastell, and they too established a successful line of progeny. One of their great-grandsons was among the worthiest of Jane Austen's distant cousins, the great English poet John Donne.

Sir Thomas and John Donne were in the maternal line of Cassandra Leigh. Donne was advised and ordained by another of Jane Austen's ancestors, this time from George Austen's hitherto unexplored maternal line – John King, the bishop of London between 1611 and 1621.

Cassandra Leigh's mother Jane (née Walker) lived with the Austens at Steventon for the first four years of their marriage, coinciding with the final four of her life. It seems safe to assume that she would have talked about her forbears. However the record of Cassandra's maternal family that has passed down to us extends back only to her great-grandmother, and it is likely that she knew nothing of more distant generations. Anne Dawtrey was a fourth great-granddaughter of Sir Thomas; Jane Austen was an eighth great-granddaughter, but the chance that

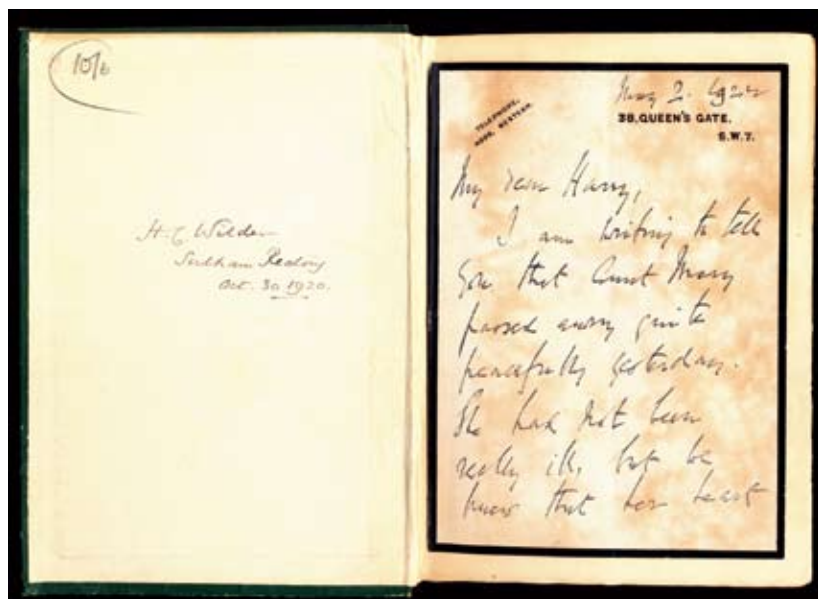
she knew of her descent from some of the most interesting people in history is negligible.

Notes

1. *The Family and Descendants of St Thomas More*. Martin Wood. Gracewing, Leominster, 2008. ISBN 978 0 85244 681 2
2. Marriage Allegations in the Registry of the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Harleian Society Vol. XXIII, 1886. p.142
3. Probate Records:
William Roper, PROB 11/60/365 (in which he names his 'daughter Dawtrey')
William Dawtrey (d.1591) PROB 11/78/329
Sir Henry Dawtrey (d. 1646) PROB 11/196/139
William Dawtrey (d. ca 1679) PROB 11/361/238
4. *Visitations of Sussex for 1530 and 1633-4*; Harleian Society, London, Vol. LIII, 1905; p.32
5. *History of Parliament Online*: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/dawtrey-william-1591>

Austen-Leighs, Wilders and Jane Austen's Bracelet

Hazel Jones



Pasted inside the cover of my *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen* by Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh is a black-edged letter, dated 2 May 1922. It was written by Edward Chenevix Austen-Leigh from 38 Queen's Gate, London to his cousin Henry Charles Wilder, informing him of their Aunt Mary's death in Roehampton the previous day. This book formerly belonged to the Revd Wilder – his name appears on the front endpaper, together with his address, Sulham Rectory, and the date, 30 October 1920, perhaps marking the day he acquired it. The letter reads:

My Dear Harry,

I am writing to tell you that Aunt Mary passed away quite peacefully yesterday. She had not been really ill, but we knew that her heart was weak – & yesterday she had a sudden attack which proved fatal.

She will be a great loss to all her nephews & nieces – for she was ever a most affectionate aunt but she was spared a long illness – & had hardly any failing of powers. She met with the end here that she would have wished – but we shall miss her much.

How are you? I hope very well – & also Cicely. Please give her our love.

Your affec.^{ate} cousin

E.C. Austen-Leigh

‘I like first Cousins to be first Cousins, & interested about each other’, Jane Austen had written in a letter to a niece, and these two men evidently kept in close touch.¹ Their families were connected through Edward Chenevix’s grandparents, James Edward Austen-Leigh and Emma, née Smith. Henry Charles’ grandparents were the Revd Henry Watson Wilder and Emma’s sister Augusta. His great-grandfather, another Henry, was the first of five Wilder rectors who held the Sulham benefice almost continuously between 1785 and 1945. Henry Charles, rector from his father’s death in 1908, was the last.

Edward Chenevix, born in 1865, was the eldest son of Cholmeley Austen-Leigh and Melesina Chenevix Trench. Unlike the Wilders, ‘all clergymen together’ as Mary Crawford would surely have noted, the Austen-Leighs chose a different career path.² Although he was the son of a vicar and married to an archbishop’s daughter, Cholmeley became a barrister and a partner in the printing firm of Spottiswoode & Co., which published his father’s *Recollections of the Vyne Hunt* in 1865. In 1942, Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Co. Ltd. printed another Austen-related text, the *Austen Papers*. On leaving Trinity College Cambridge, Edward Chenevix followed his father into the firm as Chairman.



Portrait reproduced with the kind permission of Freydis Welland.

Their ‘affectionate aunt’, Mary Augusta, was the first child to be born at Scarlets in 1838, Jane Leigh Perrot having died two years earlier, leaving the property to her great-nephew James Edward, who then added the Leigh surname to Austen. She was the sixth child of ten and her birth on 2 February was announced in the *London Evening Standard* on the 7th and in the *Sun* on the 8th. A portrait of Mary Augusta, probably painted by the artist Edmund Havell (1819 - 1894), depicts an attractive young woman with shining hair, bright hazel eyes and a teasing expression.

She lived at Scarlets with her sister and seven surviving brothers until 1853, when her father was offered a living at Bray worth £500 per annum. Eight years later she moved to 2, Norfolk Crescent, Hyde Park, with her sister Emma and younger brother William. This is the address written inside a black, leather-bound octavo-sized notebook, where, from 1861 to 1908, Mary Augusta recorded various anecdotes, family recollections and accounts of supernatural manifestations.³ Maybe she had endeared herself to her nephews and nieces by regaling them with tales she had collected of phantom coaches, prophetic dreams and haunted houses,

rather as Jane Austen had entertained the younger Austen and Knight children by telling 'delightful stories, chiefly of Fairyland'.⁴ Her brother William was a member of the Society for Psychical Research from 1884 to 1907, so presumably the accounts originated there, unless she carried out independent investigations into paranormal phenomena.⁵ Thankfully, William adopted a rational approach to the biography he wrote with his nephew Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters, a Family Record*, published in 1913 by Smith, Elder & Company.

In her late forties, Mary Augusta turned her hand to writing a novel in three volumes, *Hurst and Hanger: A History in Two Parts*, published in 1886 by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. and early in her seventies, she wrote a short biography of her father, printed for private publication in 1911, in which she recalled life at Scarlets and the impression Cassandra Austen's appearance there had made, perhaps at William's christening in 1843. Her great-aunt, she wrote, was 'a pale, dark-eyed old lady, with a high arched nose and a kind smile, dressed in a long cloak and a large drawn bonnet, both made of black satin. She looked to me quite different from anyone I had ever seen'.⁶

Cassandra's 'kind smile' marks an interest in her five-year-old great-niece, and throughout their lives she and her sister had always understood 'the importance of Aunts'. As Jane had written to Caroline Austen in November 1815, on the birth of Anna Lefroy's first child, 'Now that you are become an Aunt, you are a person of some consequence', encouraging words that Caroline had taken to heart.⁷ She chose to live near her brother and maintained close contact with his growing family. For the last twenty years of her life, she cared for her bachelor nephews Charles and Spencer at their house in Alfriston, Sussex. Mary Augusta followed the example of these unmarried women in becoming in her turn an affectionate aunt. To one great-niece, a daughter of the Revd Henry Charles Wilder who had pasted the letter of condolence into his copy of *Personal Aspects*, she gave a very special gift, Jane Austen's turquoise glass and ivory bead bracelet with a pinchbeck clasp.

Helen Wilder kept the bracelet for almost sixty years until, in 1973, she decided that it belonged with the other family artefacts held at Jane Austen's House.⁸ Writing to Sir Hugh Smiley, then President of the Jane Austen Society, she thanked him for accepting her donation – 'It is only of sentimental value as it is of beads but it is a charming thing' – and said how happy she would be to think of it at Chawton. She continued, 'My Father took me to see Cousin Mary Augusta Austen Leigh at Roehampton in 1914. I think it was in May but am not absolutely certain of the month & she gave me the bracelet telling me it had belonged to Jane Austen'. This was the last time Helen Wilder saw her great-aunt, but she maintained contact with three Austen-Leigh cousins, daughters of Mary Augusta's older brother Arthur – 'I kept up with both Honor & Dorothy till they died & now Mrs Jenkyns Cousin Winifred, is dead there is no one who remembers the old days'.⁹



*Jane Austen's bracelet (CHWJA:JAH15, photograph taken by Peter Smith)
reproduced courtesy of Jane Austen's House.*

Dating the bracelet has proved problematic. Jewellery experts at the V&A have considered in particular the decoration of the gilt metal box clasp, which has a frame of densely arranged flowers around a rectangle with a symmetrical foliage motif on a lined ground. This appears to show a Neoclassical element – the rectangle and the foliage motif within it – and, around the rectangle, the free floral decoration which came in sometime between 1810 and 1815. Much jewellery is not closely datable, but a French chatelaine of 1810 has some similarity to the ornament within the rectangle on the clasp and between 1815 and 1818 a hallmarked gold watchcase made in Liverpool and a London gold box both feature dense floral decoration. The conclusion reached by Richard Edgcumbe at the V&A is that

the broad dates for the bracelet would be about 1810-30. However, if it is correct to identify a Neoclassical element in the catch which was falling from fashion, and to date dense floral decoration as arriving in the years before 1815-16, when it is already found established on the Liverpool watch, then it could be argued that the most likely date of the bracelet is 1810-20 rather than later. In other words, if it is Jane Austen's bracelet, a case can be made that it comes from the last decade of her life, and perhaps the final years.

A second opinion, from Judy Rudoe at the British Museum, is less optimistic:

My immediate thought was, yes I've seen similar bracelet clasps, of course, they're classic 1820s, but can I find a dated one? No, because like this one, they're mostly gilt metal. The other thing that strikes me is that the individual flowers on the Austen piece are distinct, rather than a dense wreath and that does remind me of the Hull Grundy vinaigrettes and turquoise set locket etc which we have generally put, rightly or not, as 1830s.¹⁰

If the bracelet is genuine, as family tradition claims, it must date to Jane Austen's last years, but how she came by it remains a mystery. She does not mention it in letters to Cassandra and the years 1815 - 16 are particularly well covered by her correspondence. Deirdre Le Faye speculates:

She could have bought it for herself locally, using a bit of her royalties money. I'm sure the turquoise colours of ring and bracelet are significant – she might have bought/ been given the one to match the other, to be worn on special occasions. But as the acquisition of the ring can't be dated either, we are no further forward.¹¹

How the bracelet made its way into Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh's keeping is unrecorded, its provenance is not as traceable as it is for Jane Austen's turquoise ring, but the likeliest explanation is that Cassandra either left it to the little girl on whom she had smiled kindly in 1843, or to her niece Caroline Austen. The bracelet is not one of the bequests specified in Cassandra's testamentary letter of 9 May 1843, but it might have been among the 'other items' to be 'ticketed for the beneficiaries'.¹² A line in Caroline's will written in 1878, directs that various 'trinkets' were to be divided between three nieces, Fanny Caroline Lefroy, Emma Cassandra Austen-Leigh and Mary Augusta.¹³ Given that the bracelet had little monetary value – only 'of beads' – it would have counted as a mere 'trinket' albeit one of great sentimental worth. What value would be placed on such an item today, or indeed on the importance of aunts, nieces and great-nieces in treasuring and safeguarding Jane Austen's personal possessions?

Notes

1. Deirdre Le Faye. *Jane Austen's Letters* (fourth edition). Oxford: OUP, 2011. Letter 112. 29 November 1814.
2. Jane Austen. *Mansfield Park* II 11.
3. Transcript made by the owner Mr D.L Cumming in 1991 and kindly provided by Deirdre Le Faye.
4. J.E. Austen-Leigh. *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. (Ed. Kathryn Sutherland.) Oxford: OUP, 2002, p.72.
5. Devoney Looser. *The Making of Jane Austen*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017, p.271 note 33.
6. From Mary Augusta's biography of her father, *James Edward Austen-Leigh A Memoir*. Cited in Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen A Family Record*. Second Edition. Cambridge: CUP 2004, p.271.
7. Letter 123. 3 November 1815.
8. Augusta Helen Mary Wilder, b. 1895, d. 1980.
9. Helen Wilder's letter is held by Jane Austen's House.
10. Mrs Anne Hull Grundy donated jewellery collections to the British Museum and the V&A in the late 1970s.
11. Correspondence with the V&A, the British Museum and Deirde Le Faye all conducted by email.
12. Deirdre Le Faye. *A Chronology of Jane Austen*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006, p.664.
- 13 *Ibid*. p. 694.

Jane Austen's House at 70: 1949 – 2019

Sophie Reynolds

Seventy years ago, on Saturday 23 July 1949, a large crowd gathered outside a pretty, red brick house in the small Hampshire village of Chawton. The Duke of Wellington was the first to sign the new visitor book. Jane Austen's House was officially open to the public.



1949 Museum Grand Opening. (L to R - 7th Duke of Wellington, T E Carpenter, R W Chapman, Dorothy Darnell, Elizabeth Jenkins, Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh)

At that time, a visit to the home of our best-loved novelist was a very different experience to today's. You rang the bell for entry and were admitted by a caretaker – one of the tenants of the House. Only the first two rooms were open to visitors, and into these an assortment of items of furniture were arranged, with some framed documents on the walls. It was charming, but limited.

Since then, much has happened here. The House has acquired Museum Accreditation and charity status, the staff pool has expanded and professionalised, the curator's flat has been turned into staff offices, there is a new Learning Centre in the garden and the barn has become the Gift Shop. It is very different, and utterly the same, because the purpose of this house, this museum, is to encapsulate something of the spirit of 200 years ago, when Jane Austen lived here. It is dedicated to the memory of that extraordinary young woman, living simply and humbly, writing at her tiny table, listening out for that famous creaking door, enjoying this final, beloved home of her own. It is for her that over a million people have visited, to stand in her footprints and to look upon the views that she knew and loved.

The difficulties of turning Jane Austen's House into a museum were manifold. In the first place, the building was old and by the 1940s it was in a poor state of

repair. A hundred years had passed since the death of Cassandra Austen, and in that time the House had been divided into tenements. Urgent renovation works were needed. But you will know the story – of how, in 1940, Dorothy Darnell set up the Jane Austen Society with the aim of buying and preserving the House for the nation; how they raised funds and put up notices, and how one of those, in *The Times*, attracted the attention of Mr. T. Edward Carpenter, a London lawyer. In 1948 he purchased the House in memory of his son, Philip, who had been killed in action in 1944, and established the Jane Austen Memorial Trust to run the House as a museum.

The first few years were challenging. The House was still occupied by tenants, and only two rooms could be opened to visitors. One of those tenants, Pamela Jane Goddard (now Barbour) had been born in Jane Austen's bedroom in the summer of 1941. Her widowed grandmother and two aunts lived in one third of the house, comprising a kitchen with an oil stove, fireplace, side oven and pantry in what is now the reading room, and a sitting room, now the dining room. Upstairs, Jane's bedroom was occupied by Pamela and Aunt Annie; another aunt slept in the attic and grandmother had what is now Mrs Austen's bedroom. Beyond the sealed sitting room and landing doors were the King family's quarters and the Newmans had the original kitchen and drawing room. When the Kings moved to Alton and their rooms made available to view, one of the aunts became the first curator, summoned by a bell at all times of the day.¹



As visits to the House increased over these early years, it became evident to the Society that its funds must be used to fix the roof and effect other urgent repairs. Once the physical state of the House had been attended to, the next stumbling block for this burgeoning museum was that there were very few objects to display, as the furniture and other objects belonging to the Austens were long gone. However, as Dorothy Darnell had predicted, once the House was established as a museum, people with artefacts began to come forward. Donations were prompted by newspaper notices calling for 'relics' and 'scraps' relating to Jane Austen and her family to be given to the newly-formed museum.

The Society was instrumental in establishing the Museum's collection. Some of the first items to be acquired were pieces of furniture which helped to dress the House in the way that Jane Austen would have known. As noted in the Society Report for 1950: 'The Committee are also greatly pleased, and not a little proud, to be able to report the purchase, in 1950, of a walnut escritoire and two Hepplewhite chairs, which formed part of the furniture of Steventon Rectory when Jane Austen lived there, and were left behind for the use of James Austen, who succeeded his father as Rector of Steventon when the latter moved with his wife and daughters to Bath in 1801. This is the Society's first major purchase'.²

The process of building the Museum's collection has, at its best, been one of returning items to the House that were there during the Austens' tenure. One such item, often overlooked, is the dining room grate. It is an unassuming feature, but in its own way it is a vital part of the story of the Austens in this house, and also of the formation of the Jane Austen Society itself.

The grate was rescued by Dorothy Darnell in 1940, when it was removed from the dining room to make way for the tenant's new gas fire. She found it thrown out on a heap of nettles next to the neighbouring forge and arranged for it to go into storage at the Curtis Museum in Alton. In May of the same year, she set up the Jane Austen Society with the aim of raising money to repair the House. In 1953, just a few months before her death, the grate was returned to its original position and the dining room room opened to the public. The Society Report told

2 - MONDAY, JULY 10, 1950.

Evening News
AND SOUTHERN DAILY MAIL
PORTSMOUTH.
Telephone 2211 (10 Lines).

**AUSTEN
"SCRAPS"
WANTED**

"JANKEITES" in their hundreds and from many parts of the country came to Alton on Saturday for the annual meeting of the Jane Austen Society, and afterwards explored the Chawton countryside and the Jane Austen Museum which has had many additions since it was opened a year ago.

The main business concerned the draft constitution for the working of the Society. This was presented by Mr. T. Edward Carpenter and adopted. It set the annual subscription at 1s. and the life subscription at £5.

Mr. W. Hugh Curtis (Chairman) revealed that the Society's membership was now just over 900. He felt it was not enough and the aim was to increase it. Many improvements had been made during the year to the cottage which houses the museum, and especially to the garden. The outbuildings had also been improved, and in one of them was the donkey cart in which Jane used to ride from Chawton to Alton.

Lieut.-Col. Satterthwaite said the funds at the end of September amounted to £2994, but they had since dropped to £84, because of expenditure on improvements.



(L to R): Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh; Mrs A Newman (?); Dorothy Darnell; T Edward Carpenter.

the story in Dorothy Darnell's obituary, proudly stating that this was 'the first work of rescue and preservation accomplished by the Jane Austen Society'.³

Since then the Society, along with descendants of the Austen family and other individuals, have generously donated many objects to the Museum, including items of furniture, books, paintings and letters. Objects have come to the Museum in a range of ways – some quite dramatic. One of the best acquisition stories has to be that of Alberta Burke, the American collector who donated a lock of Jane Austen's hair to the Museum in 1949. It took place at the opening of the House, during which Mr Carpenter made a speech in which he lamented that lack of funds meant the Museum was unable to compete with international collectors. In particular, he noted, a lock of Jane Austen's hair had recently been sold at Sotheby's and had been purchased by an American. At this Mrs Burke, seated in the audience, muttered under her breath 'I will give them the damned hair', then rose in her seat and declared to the crowd 'I am the American who bought Jane's hair and if the Society would like to have it, I shall be glad to make a contribution of the hair'. At that point, Mr Burke noted, 'the tent in which the meeting was being held almost collapsed'.⁴



The Cottage at 70: The newly papered dining parlour in September 2019.



Today, the Museum's collection of objects relating to Jane Austen and her close family circle is unparalleled. It is the natural home for items relating to Jane Austen's story to be held and displayed, and it works actively to preserve and protect artefacts that would otherwise be lost to the public realm.

The issue of important objects being acquired by individuals overseas, and disappearing from public view, is one that continues. Take, for example, Jane Austen's turquoise ring, which came to light in 2012. It was purchased at auction by the American singer Kelly Clarkson, but a temporary export ban prevented it from leaving the country. The Museum ran a campaign to raise the £152,450 required to buy it, which received huge support. An anonymous donation of £100,000, alongside many other smaller donations, meant that we were able to acquire the ring which is now on display in the House.

Another discovery took place in 2018, when a set of original pen and ink drawings by 19th century illustrator Chris Hammond was discovered in an attic in New Zealand. The illustrations, made for the George Allen edition of *Sense & Sensibility* in 1899, had lain there undisturbed for some fifty years before they came to light in a family archive comprising documents and drawings originally belonging to Robert Stone Florance, a magistrate in New Zealand in the early 1900s. With the generous assistance of the Jane Austen Society Jane Austen 250 Fund the Museum was able to acquire them, and four of the twelve artworks are now on display in the House for visitors to enjoy.

Objects in the collection are not always the result of a gift, sale or loan, however. Sometimes the House itself reveals a secret that helps us to understand it better – be it a broken pot in the garden or a rusty nail beneath the floorboards. In recent years, we were excited to discover fragments of historic wallpaper hidden underneath layers of newer paint and paper in the drawing room and the family room. These wallpapers were dated to the early 19th century when the Austens were living here, which helped us to understand more about what those rooms would have looked like at the time. Working with historic wallpaper specialists Hamilton Weston, the wallpapers were recreated in 2017 using the hand blocking technique with which the originals would have been made, and the rooms were re-papered in their initial designs. In 2018 we were thrilled to discover another fragment of wallpaper, this time in the dining room, and as a 70th birthday present to ourselves we again worked with Hamilton Weston to create a reproduction paper featuring this design. 'Chawton Leaf', with its pattern of bright 'arsenic green' leaves, is a striking contrast to the other wallpapers seen in the House, which feature light, cheerful patterns. The paper, with its border of dark vine leaves, went up in September and has changed the atmosphere of the room in a dramatic and exciting way, bringing it closer than ever to the room that Jane herself would have known.

The Museum's first Chairman, T. Edward Carpenter, was clear that he did not want the House to be a 'dead' museum, but 'to give the impression of rooms which had been lived in at one time by Miss Austen and her family'.⁵ To this end, Museum staff have always endeavoured to preserve the ease and friendliness of a

family home, and to retain its special character and charm.

Indeed, it is the friendly, homely nature of the House that we think makes it so special. It is easy to imagine Jane here, with her sister and mother, settled at last in a home of their own, back in their beloved Hampshire.

Over the summer of 2019, we did some visitor research to find out what our visitors like best about the House and what we could do to improve their experience. We asked them which was their favourite room, and the answer was unequivocal – Jane’s bedroom. In this room, we know, many visitors feel particularly close to her. Perhaps it is the idea that she lived in this room most – looking out of this very window and stepping upon these creaking floorboards. Perhaps it is her portrait, glancing quietly down from above the fireplace. Or perhaps it is simply in our imagination that we feel a sense of intimacy and closeness to her here. Whatever it is, and wherever it strikes you in the House or garden, it is a joy to feel a connection with her in the house she loved.

If we read Jean Bowden’s *Letter from Chawton*, written to the Jane Austen Society of North America in 1990, we may find something of an answer –

I am often asked if Jane Austen’s House is haunted, and I say “No, but it does feel very friendly and welcoming”. And now I’ll let you into a secret – I do sometimes hear girlish laughter when I’m in the house on my own, and my cat, William, whom some of you know, can see someone on the stairs, though I can’t! Even on a cold, wet, dark day in the depths of winter, the house feels warm and happy, and in summer sunshine, well, it’s really delightful.

The sun streams into the dining parlour in the mornings, and I love to think of Mrs. Austen sitting in the window enjoying the sunshine, and watching the world go by.⁶

This sense of the nearness of the past, which the House evokes, is a rare and special thing. It is not quite a sense of ‘stepping back in time’ as some of our visitors hope – it is more real than that. It is the feeling that the past happened here, and that if you find just the right moment, you could almost touch it.

Notes

1. Handwritten notes presented to JAH by Mrs Pam Barbour on 27 July 2019
2. Report for the period 1st Oct., 1949 – 31st Dec., 1950. Jane Austen Society *Collected Reports* 1949 – 1965, p.15
3. Miss Dorothy Darnell. Jane Austen Society *Collected Reports* 1949 – 1965, p.43
4. Juliette Wells. *Everybody’s Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination*. London: Continuum, 2011, p.55
5. ‘Jane Austen’s House at Chawton’. *Herald and Alton Gazette – North and East Hants Observer*, Friday 22 May 1953
6. ‘Living in Chawton Cottage’. Jean Bowden. *Persuasions* #12 (1990)

Christine Penney

Manuscripts

Readers of *News Letter* No. 53, Autumn 2019, will have seen the account of the Jane Austen's House Museum's purchase of a fragment of Jane Austen's letter to Anna Lefroy dated 29 November 1814 (112 in Deirdre Le Faye's edition). This was reported in my Notes for 2017, when it was one of three fragments of this letter offered by Sotheby's on 11 July, at Lots 82, 83 and 84. Lots 82 and 84 sold but 83, the principal portion of the letter, estimated at £30,000-£50,000, did not. Maggs Bros. Ltd subsequently bought it and offered it for £38,000. In the summer of 2019 the Museum, raising over £10,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Stephen James Charitable Trust, the Walter Guinness Charitable Trust and over 250 private donors from all over the world, succeeded in buying it. The Museum now holds thirteen of Jane's letters. Understandably it did not bid for Letter 88, to Cassandra, dated 16 September 1813, which was Lot 5 at Bonhams, New York, on 23 October, part of the Dodge Family Autograph Collection. This is the letter recording a visit to the dentist by the Knight girls and the choice of a dinner service by Edward and Fanny. Estimated at \$80,000 it sold for \$200,075 (£163,572) – “a stellar result” declared the auction house and “a world record”.

First and early editions

Sense and Sensibility

The Doyle auction of Rare books and Autographs, New York, on 17 April offered first editions of all the novels, except *Mansfield Park*, from the estate of Frances “Peggy” Brooks. Lot 226 was a copy of the first edition of *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811 (Gilson A1). There were no details of condition. Estimated at \$30,000-\$40,000 it sold for \$50,000. Lot 139 at Bonhams on 26 June comprised three Jane Austen novels in the Bentley's Standard Novels series, 1833. The first was no. 23, *Sense and Sensibility* (Gilson D1). It was bound in modern half calf with panelled spines and red morocco labels. The provenance for all three was Harriet Buckland (née Lush) and her daughter Adeline, with ownership signatures dated 1875. Estimated at £800-£1,200 the set sold for £1,912.

Pride and Prejudice

Lot 227 at the Doyle auction, mentioned above, was a copy of the first edition, 1813 (Gilson A3) from the same estate. Again no condition details were given but the photograph showed the three vols. with modern brown spines and dark blue labels. The estimate was \$15,000-\$25,000 and the Lot sold for \$31,250. The Bentley Standard Novels edition, 1833, no. 30 (Gilson D5) was part of Lot 139 at Bonhams on 26 June, mentioned above. Binding and provenance were the same. Another copy, bound in later half calf, was Lot 153 at Forum Auctions on 31

October. Estimated at £200 -£300 it sold for £550.

Mansfield Park

The Bentley's Standard Novels edition, 1833, no. 27 (Gilson D3) was part of Lot 139 at Bonhams on 26 June, mentioned above, with the same binding and provenance.

Emma

Lot 184 at Bonhams on 27 March was a copy of the first edition, 1816 (Gilson A8). Bound in near contemporary half calf with gilt panelled spines it lacked the half-titles and the final blank in Vol. 1. Estimated at £6,000-£8,000 it sold for £11,937. Another copy was Lot 228 at the Doyle auction, mentioned above and from the same estate. The photograph showed the three vols. bound in contemporary half calf with dark blue labels. Estimated at \$15,000-\$20,000 it sold for \$31,250, exactly the same figure realised for the *Pride and Prejudice* in the same sale. Lot 441 at Dominic Winter on 10 April was a medley of books which included a copy of the Bentley Standard Novels edition, 1833 (Gilson D2), in contemporary green half calf with later labels. Estimated at £300-£500 the entire Lot sold for £440, so someone got a bargain.

Northanger Abbey and Persuasion

A copy of the first edition, 1818 (Gilson A9) was Lot 229 at the Doyle auction mentioned above and from the same estate. Only the title page was shown. It was estimated at \$1,500-\$2,500 and sold for \$3,125.

Collected eds

Lot 232 at Bonhams on 4 December was Bentley's collected edition, 1833 (Gilson D6). In contemporary polished calf with gilt spines and red and green morocco labels it was estimated at £2,000-£3,000 and sold for £3,800.

Lot 225 at Forum Auctions on 28 March was a reprint of the original 1833 edition – six vols. in five. Although there was no engraved title page and only an engraved frontispiece dated 1833, imprints on the final leaves, listing the publisher as A. and G.A. Spottiswood, indicated the real date was c.1854. This is almost certainly correct. On page 229 of his bibliography David Gilson lists an edition with a title page, presumably missing from Forum's copy, giving the publishers as Bentley in London, Oliver and Boyd in Edinburgh and Hodges and Smith in Dublin, dated 1854. He also lists an edition dated 1856 but the description does not match that for 1854, mentioning Spottiswoode rather than A. and G.A Spottiswoode for example. Further evidence that this was the 1854 edition was provided by the provenance: Vol.1 had a presentation inscription from F.C. Knatchbull (Jane Austen's niece Fanny Knight) to her daughter Louisa, dated 1856 in Louisa's hand. Louisa's signature was on the front free endpaper. Forum suggested the occasion was Louisa's 21st birthday; she was born in 1834. The catalogue

description made much of the connection with Fanny, describing it as “a lovely association copy, once owned by Jane Austen’s favourite niece”; but Deirdre Le Faye points out that Fanny had her own firsts, given her directly by Jane, and probably bought these later reprints as a gift for Louisa. There were three pencil notes in the *Memoir* in Vol.1, probably in Louisa’s hand. Two of them are quoted, noting remarks made by Fanny. One of them, giving an opinion of Jane, is rather similar to the infamous letter Fanny wrote to her sister Marianne in 1869. Beneath the text “her carriage and deportment were quiet but graceful” is written: “‘the sort of thing they call graceful I call awkward’ Mama”. The other, much kinder note, in the margin next to the text commenting on Jane’s “perfectly amiable temper”, “lively imagination and a keen relish for wit” and the “happiness of knowing the authoress” says “‘True’ Mama”. The set, lacking the half-titles and additional engraved vignette titles, was bound in contemporary half calf, spines gilt with morocco labels, three of which were lacking. The estimate was £4,000-£6,000 and it sold for £5,000, no doubt on the strength of the provenance; but Fanny’s hitherto unknown comments were probably worth it.

Other material

Lot 31 at Bonhams on 11 March (which I have noticed was in 2020 but I include it here as it is too interesting to leave for another year) was a book whose subscribers numbered thirteen Austens, including Jane – the second of the two books to which she subscribed, the first being Fanny Burney’s *Camilla* in 1796. This was a rather more sober work: the Rev. Thomas Jefferson’s *Two Sermons, on the Reasonableness, and Salutary Effects of Fearing God, As Governor and Judge of the World*, 1808. The aim was stated on the title page: “Published solely with the View of assisting the Endeavours of a Parent, who has no professional Preferment, and no other Aid but his Labours in a private School, to support and place out a Family of eight Children”. The complete list of Austen subscribers reads:” Miss H.L. Austen, Southampton, 3 copies; Mrs Austen, ditto; Miss Austen, ditto; Miss Jane Austen, ditto; Mrs Austen, Swift’s, Cranbrook, 3 copies; F.M. Austen, Esq. Kippington, Kent, 3 copies; Mrs Austen, ditto, 3 copies; Miss Austen, ditto; Rev. J. Austen, Sevenoaks; Mr W. Austen ditto; Mr G. Austen, ditto, 2 copies; Edward Austen, Esq, Godmersham Park, Kent, 3 copies; Mrs E. Austen, ditto, 3 copies”. An article by the late William Jarvis in the 1989 Report, “Mr Jefferson’s case” (pp 15-18) identified the author, who had previously been thought to be Joseph or William Jefferson, as Thomas Jefferson of Tonbridge, Kent. His study of the book, which included a preface explaining the purpose of the publication, suggested strongly that the children were Jefferson’s own. There were over 1,200 subscribers, the vast majority from Jefferson’s county of Kent, but 48 from Southampton. Extracts from Jane’s letters, quoted below, indicate her interest in the case and suggest that, as well as encouraging her brother Edward to subscribe, she may also have done some canvassing in Southampton, where the family had been living since 1806. Jarvis identified the first of the Austen subscribers, Miss H.L. Austen, as Harriet Lennard Austen, a Southampton neighbour mentioned

in several of the letters; she was the daughter of Henry Austen, a cousin of Jane's father. The second edition of Deirdre Le Faye's *Jane Austen: a Family Record* 2004 records the Austens' visit to the family on a trip to Tonbridge in 1783, but without Jane and Cassandra who were in Oxford being tutored by Mrs Cawley. The next three subscribers are obviously Jane's mother, her sister Cassandra and herself. F.M. Austen is Francis Motley Austen, son of Francis Austen of Sevenoaks (uncle of Jane's father). The list ends with Jane's brother Edward and his wife Elizabeth. Jane's two letters on the subject to Cassandra, written from Godmersham in June 1808, are numbers 52 and 54. In the first she wrote: "I have read Mr Jefferson's case to Edward, and he desires to have his name set down for a guinea and his wife's for another; but does not wish for more than one copy of the work". In the second she wrote: "In the mean while let me remember that I have now some money to spare, & that I wish to have my name put down as a subscriber to Mr Jefferson's works. My last letter was closed before it occurred to me how possible, how right, & how gratifying such a measure wd be". This copy of the book, which was finally published in December according to Jarvis, was untrimmed, in contemporary sheep-backed boards, and estimated at £1,000-£1,500. It did not sell, but I hope the subscribers provided Jefferson with a handsome sum.

The next Lot in the same sale, 32, was a book from the collection of a different Jane Austen, but related: the daughter of Francis Motley Austen, whom Jane and Cassandra probably met in 1788, when they visited Great Uncle Francis in Sevenoaks. The title page is inscribed: "Jane Austen 1788" but there is also the book label of Jane Campion; Jane married William John Campion in 1797. (Deirdre Le Faye had assisted Bonhams in sorting out the two Janes.) The book was Vol. 4 only of *Theatre a l'usage des jeunes personnes*, 1781, by Madame Caroline Stéphanie Félicité, Comtesse de Genlis. Bound in contemporary calf with a defective spine and the upper cover detached it was estimated at £800-£1,200. This did not sell either.

Christian White's catalogue of modern first editions (issued in October 2018 but not picked up until February 2019) listed a presentation copy of the Oxford edition of *Lady Susan*, 1925 (Gilson F5). It was presented by the editor, R.W. Chapman to Lord Crewe. A letter from Chapman to Lord Crewe dated 1933 was tipped in, suggesting "you might care to have this as a memento of your old friend Lady Susan" and adding he had plans to "sit at your feet when we entertain the Canadians". The bookplate of Robert Crewe-Milnes was opposite the first pastedown. The price was £200 (altered to £100 after it had been sold).

Lot 263 on 6 February at Mellors and Kirk was an early 19th century group of life size silhouettes of Jane Austen's nephew, William Knight, and six of his seven surviving children: Elizabeth Caroline (afterwards Harrison), Gertrude, Edward Bridges, Arthur Charles, Richard and Frances Louisa (afterwards Parker).

Described as "cut paper with pencil inscriptions" they were in later Regency style ebonised frames. William (1798-1873) was the fourth son of Jane's brother Edward and his wife Elizabeth. He was Rector of Steventon from 1823-1873. The six children portrayed were by his first wife, Caroline Portal. The silhouettes were apparently discovered at the Newark fair many years ago. The estimate was £800-£1,200 and the Lot was sold, for, the auctioneer tells me, a fairly modest sum whose details were not to hand – the coronavirus lockdown not allowing him access to the files. Deirdre's article in the 1998 *Report* pp 10-12 records an identical set, all identified on the back, which were donated to Jane Austen's House by Harold Ward of Grantham, Lincs. He said he had purchased them from a dealer in Bristol. Deirdre dated them to about 1840, as the silhouette of Frances, the youngest born in 1837, shows her as beyond babyhood. She suggests they remained in the family until the death of Elizabeth, who died in 1927. The Mellors and Kirk set are obviously copies and the auctioneer, who knew about the set at Chawton, told me that they, too, belonged to Harold Ward – in fact the entire sale was devoted to his collection. Deirdre suggests that copies were perhaps made for each sitter. I wonder what has happened to the other five.

The *Report* for 2018 contained an article by Karen Ievers and Sophia Hillan (author of *May, Lou and Cass*) on the photograph album bought by Mrs Ievers on eBay for \$1,000 (£780) – too late for my *Notes* for that year. The *Times* reported on the item early in 2019, so I include it here. A miniature of Lady George Hill (Jane Austen's niece Cassandra Knight), bought subsequently by Mrs Ievers from a French art gallery, appeared on the back cover of the 2018 *Report*. I was interested to note that Lord George Hill was the son of Arthur Hill, Marquess of Downshire, and his wife Mary, who was also Baroness Sandys of Ombersley in her own right. Mrs Ievers had been informed that the Sandys collection contained several miniatures of the Hill/Knight family, including one of Cassandra almost identical to the one she had purchased. Ombersley Court, Worcestershire, is not far from Hartlebury Castle, where I look after the Hurd Library. It had a very fine library which has recently been sold but in 2017 I spent some time there, surveying the contents for the executors. Although I had no idea that the "little marchioness", as she was affectionately called, was Cassandra Knight's mother-in-law, my first investigation, as in any library I examine, was to see if the collection contained any of Jane Austen's novels. Sadly no, although the marchioness and her daughters were evidently keen on early 19th century literature – novels in original boards were distributed all over the house. Deirdre recently heard from Mrs Ievers that both the album and the miniature have now been sold to the Donegal County Archives – very appropriate, as the Hills lived in County Donegal and Cassandra's two sisters, Marianne and Louisa, are buried there. Mrs Ievers tells me that a descendant of Lord George Hill also has a miniature of Cassandra, very similar to that in the Ombersley collection, except that her dark brown hair has faded to blonde. My colleague, the Sandys archivist, tells me the Ombersley miniatures are going to Hillsborough Castle, the home

of the little marchioness's husband. It is always pleasing to find historic material leaving private hands for the public domain.

Lot 183 at Bonhams on 27 March was Hugh Thomson's original pen, ink and pencil illustration, captioned "Mrs Elton was first seen at church", signed and dated "H.T., [18]96". This was published in chapter 10 of Macmillan's 1896 edition of *Emma* (Gilson E86). The estimate was £700-£900. It failed to sell.

On 25 July Dominic Winter sold three portrait miniatures, attributed to George Jackson in 1811, of members of the Digweed family who lived at Steventon Manor and were friends of the Austens. All three were estimated at £700-£1,000 each. Lot 221 was of Francis William Digweed, which sold for £1,600. Lot 222 was of his brother James, the youngest son of their parents, Hugh and Ruth Digweed who rented the manor first from Thomas Knight and next from Edward. Francis is not mentioned in Jane Austen's letters but James is, several times. Letter 14, 18 December 1798, records the "very ugly cut" he sustained when he was kicked by his horse. The miniature shows him with a background of books. He was born in 1774, took orders in 1797 and was George Austen's curate in 1798. This Lot sold for £1,650. Lot 223 was of his wife, Mary Susannah. She was the daughter of John Lyford, the local doctor. Her cousin was the Dr Lyford who looked after Jane in Winchester during her last illness. This Lot also sold for £1,650. All three miniatures were purchased by the Jane Austen's House Museum which has had a good year for acquisitions.

Jane Austen Studies 2019

Rita J. Dashwood

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*‘We must allow for difference of Taste’: Jane Austen,
19th-century publishing and 19th-century readers.*

Delivered at the AGM on the 13th of July 2019



Gillian Dow

I always think it is impossible to be in Chawton – this picture-postcard English village, with its thatched cottages, church, Great House – without thinking of the very Englishness of England’s Jane. I have, however, spent much of my career reading English literature and arguing that we cannot – should not – read it in isolation from the literature of the Continent, and in particular, the literature that was being published across the Channel in France. The business of books in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was an international one. French books were omnipresent on British shelves, and the library collection we now have here at Chawton House is no exception. The owner of Chawton House, Edward Austen, later Edward Knight, inherited the Knight family library at Godmersham Park in Kent. The 1818 catalogue is now on deposit here in the library at Chawton House thanks to the generosity of its current owner Richard Knight. The catalogue records significant holdings of French books. Indeed, French originals and English translations sat on the library shelves, and were therefore available to Jane Austen when she visited Godmersham. Austen writes of spending time in the library, and she made at least six extended visits in the course of her forty-one years. In 1818, the year after Austen’s death, the library contained a great deal of French fiction: authors such as Crébillon *films*, Lesage, Voltaire, Marmontel, Montesquieu and Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, to name but a few. Jean Jacques Rousseau’s European best seller *Julie, où la nouvelle Héloïse*, first published in 1761, seems to have entered the collection at Godmersham Park as a gift to Catherine Knight, Edward Austen’s adoptive mother, in 1779: it is inscribed to her.

The Knight family library at Godmersham Park seems to have been a typical example of such a collection. The importance of the conspicuous presentation

of French texts on British shelves was acknowledged by those who created their libraries in the age of bibliomania. Jane Austen wrote famously of her family that they were all ‘great novel readers, and not ashamed of being so’. This reading, I am certain, included a great deal of French fiction.

To furnish the bookshelves of the British upper-middle classes with French texts, books were brought back from Grand Tours of Continental Europe. Deirdre Le Faye’s article about Edward Austen Knight’s own Grand Tour, published in the Austen Society report, documents that after travelling in France, Switzerland and Germany in 1788 and 1789, Edward sent a case back to Godmersham Park from Hamburg. There was a lively traffic across the Channel of merchants, diplomats, scholars, students, soldiers and tourists who returned home with books, which were much cheaper on the Continent than at home. But there was a far easier way to access French books, and that was from the booksellers of London. French novels appeared on booksellers’ shelves in the capital almost simultaneously with their appearance in Paris. French booksellers in London congregated around the Strand, and leading dealers stocked imported French books alongside English translations. These booksellers were serving the British taste for French fiction. But questions of taste – and indeed the matter of what good taste was – were hotly debated in the late seventeenth century, throughout the eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth century.

In France, the debate circled broadly around the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in the late seventeenth century – the Ancients supporting the superiority of classical authors, the Moderns arguing that true Enlightenment came from the superiority of seventeenth century authors. At its most basic, the supposed superiority of French taste above the taste of all other nations was at stake. French literary figures were convinced that their literary models were the models that other playwrights, novelists, and poets should follow across Europe. Initially, ideas of good British taste were imported via the French ‘goût’. At one end of the century, Shaftesbury felt good taste was properly the domain of the aristocracy; later, Addison felt that taste was concerned with pleasures of the imagination; later still, in his *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), Archibald Alison believed that

The pleasure ... which accompanies the emotions of taste, may be considered not as a simple, but as a complex pleasure; and as arising not from any separate and peculiar sense, but from the union of the pleasure of SIMPLE EMOTION, with that which is annexed, by the constitution of the human mind, to the exercise of IMAGINATION.

We can, reading eighteenth-century British commentators on taste, hear such different accounts as to puzzle us exceedingly. George Colman’s words on taste from the essay published in his periodical *The Connoisseur* in 1756 are well known, but they are worth quoting at some length:

Taste is at present the darling idol of the polite world... The fine ladies and gentlemen dress with Taste; the architects ... build with Taste; the painters paint with Taste;

critics read with Taste; and in short, fiddlers, players, singers, dancers, and mechanics themselves, are all the sons and daughters of Taste. Yet in this amazing super-abundance of Taste, few can say what it really is, or what the word itself signifies.

In terms of thoughts about literature, nascent British realism was increasingly defining itself as ‘not being French’, and especially in ‘not being French’ in relation to matters of taste. And I want to argue that Jane Austen’s fiction demonstrates these anxieties neatly.

Austen’s narrator frequently adopts a mocking tone when describing matters of taste, and her heroines’ attitudes to this most complex of eighteenth-century topics. Think of Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*: she has ‘no taste for a garden’ – if she gathers ‘flowers at all’, it is ‘chiefly for the pleasure of mischief’ (p. 6).¹ Catherine Morland may, in time, learn to love a hyacinth, but when the reader meets her, her taste is completely unformed by the standards of the day. It is via the forming of her taste for drawing and her admiration of the picturesque that Henry Tilney is shown to be falling in love with Catherine – the lover as tutor role such a common one in eighteenth-century fiction on both sides of the Channel – we might think, indeed of Jean Jacques Rousseau and his *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) here. Catherine Morland – the ironic narrative voice tells us in *Northanger Abbey* – ‘knew nothing of drawing – nothing of taste’ (p.112). Catherine expresses her want of knowledge, and Henry’s lecture on the picturesque immediately follows. She is an excellent student: ‘His instructions [are] so clear that she soon began to see beauty in everything admired by him’ (p. 113). Rather than being put off by Catherine’s ignorant mind, this is shown to be a positive advantage: she has, Henry discovers ‘a great deal of natural taste’ (p. 113) and a very little instruction by him leads Catherine to feel exactly as Henry does about the picturesque qualities of the city of Bath!

Henry Tilney’s influence, here, must be set against Isabella Thorpe. She, too, attempts to instruct Catherine and to shape her taste: in the reading of fashionable Gothic novels as a way to further the bonds of friendship. Whether or not one actually reads these fashionable novels matters little to Isabella. What matters is that a reference to a shared cultural capital can be used to further female intimacy. But the only reason for cultivating those social bonds is to increase one’s social circle in order to attract a mate. Flirtation is key. And in the case of Captain Tilney and Isabella Thorpe, it is shown to be in extremely bad taste. Remember the exchange between Henry Tilney and Catherine Morland when the superficial nature of that relationship is revealed:

“Then you do not suppose he ever really cared about her?”

“I am persuaded that he never did”.

“And only made believe to do so for mischief’s sake?”

Henry bowed his assent. (p. 225)

And please remember, too, that Henry Tilney refers to Isabelle Thorpe as a ‘coquette’: the French etymology of this word is significant.

Catherine Morland is not the only one of Austen's heroines to have her taste shaped by her future husband. Think of Fanny Price, and her lack of formal instruction in all things considered accomplished. Fanny is so unworldly, on her arrival at Mansfield Park, that cousins Maria and Julia Bertram are quite shocked: she has 'but two sashes' and has 'never learnt French' (p. 15). Governess Miss Lee can – and does – teach Fanny French and History, but it is Fanny's cousin Edmund Bertram who makes 'reading useful by talking to her of what she read' (p. 25). Edmund encourages Fanny's taste, and he corrects her judgement. Indeed, the comparisons later in the novel between Mary Crawford and Fanny Price hinge on matters of taste and artifice. Mary Crawford has 'none of Fanny's delicacy of taste, of mind, of feeling'; her attention is 'all for men and women, her talents for the light and lively' she sees 'Nature, inanimate Nature, with little observation' (p. 94). The 'light and the lively' draw Edmund away from Fanny throughout the novel. The process is all the more painful for Austen's readers because we see Fanny's true worth. Fanny's natural taste is greatly admired by Edmund. Think of the scene in volume one of *Mansfield Park*, when, in Chapter 11, Edmund turns from the charms of Mary Crawford and the performance of a glee, to join Fanny at the window, and reflect upon the harmony, repose and tranquillity of nature:

"I like to hear your enthusiasm, Fanny. It is a lovely night, and they are much to be pitied who have not been taught to feel, in some degree, as you do; who have not, at least, been given a taste for Nature in early life. They lose a great deal."

"*You* taught me to think and feel on the subject, cousin."

"I had a very apt scholar". (p. 132)

The closeness between Fanny and Edmund, and in particular his understanding of her excellent natural taste, is shown to further brilliant effect in the passage in the novel where Edmund is trying to persuade Fanny of the merits of Henry Crawford as a marriage partner for her. Fanny's distress is apparent, although she avoids a 'direct' answer:

"There never were two people more dissimilar. We have not one taste in common. We should be miserable" (p. 403).

Edmund's rebuttal hinges on his belief that Fanny is mistaken:

"You *have* tastes in common. You have moral and literary taste in common. You have both warm hearts and benevolent feelings; and, Fanny, who that heard him read, and saw you listen to Shakespeare the other night, will think you unfitted as companions" (p. 403).

For Edmund, the difference in tempers between his cousin Fanny and Henry Crawford – the former is 'serious', the latter 'lively' – is positively advantageous. Edmund has persuaded himself that in matters of matrimony 'the tempers' of the partners

“had better be unlike: I mean unlike in the flow of the spirits, in the manners, in the inclination for much or little company, in the propensity to talk or to be silent, to be grave or to be gay” (p. 403).

It never escapes the attention of Jane Austen’s alert readers that what Edmund Bertram is doing, in convincing himself of the attractions of Henry Crawford for his reserved cousin, is convincing himself of the attractions of the ‘lively’ Mary Crawford as a marriage partner for himself. Austen’s readers knows he is quite wrong, even though we may, at times, fall for Mary Crawford’s charms ourselves.

The resolution in *Mansfield Park* – with Henry Crawford eloping with Maria Bertram – is not simply a critique of Henry Crawford’s *taste*: rather, it is evidence of his moral bankruptcy. For Austen, it is absolutely possible to have what society considers to be ‘good taste’ – to admire the ‘right’ kind of literature, to have the correct views on the picturesque – and to be misguided on matters of importance. We see this juxtaposition between ‘taste’ and ‘good character’ played out in the pages of her novels.

Think of Frank Churchill in *Emma*. His arrival is long-awaited in the village of Highbury, not least because it will break up the monotony of those three or four families in a country village. Mr Knightley hopes not to meet with a chattering coxcomb, but Emma Woodhouse seems to be looking for exactly that:

“My idea of him is, that he can adapt his conversation to the taste of everybody, and has the power as well as the wish of being universally agreeable. To you, he will talk of farming; to me, of drawing or music; and so on to everybody, having that general information on all subjects which will enable him to follow the lead, or take the lead, just as propriety may require, and to speak extremely well on each; that is my idea of him.” (p. 161)

Mr Knightley, you’ll remember, is horrified:

“if he turns out anything like it, he will be the most insufferable fellow breathing! ... My dear Emma, your own good sense could not endure such a puppy when it came to the point.” (pp. 161-162)

Puppies who make themselves superficially agreeable to the society around them by demonstrative displays of their taste, are never to be trusted in Austen’s fiction.

Let’s take another: Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility*. From her first meeting with him, Marianne Dashwood is anxious to discover his pursuits, his talents and his genius, and she is very frustrated that Sir John can give her little information other than that he owns “the nicest little black bitch of a pointer”, and last Christmas, “at a little hop at the park”, “danced from eight o’clock till four, without once sitting down” (pp. 52-53). On the second meeting between Marianne Dashwood and Willoughby, things are more satisfactorily resolved. Marianne discovers that ‘their enjoyment of dancing and music was mutual, and that it arose from a general

conformity of judgment in all that related to either'. Key, for Marianne, in her admiration of Willoughby is that 'Their taste was strikingly alike. The same books, the same passages were idolized by each' (p. 56). But here, Jane Austen gives us a warning sign. Willoughby's politeness, his gallantry, and his own admiration of Marianne is not down to his admiring Marianne's taste for Cowper and Scott. She is, the narrator has already told us, 'called a beautiful girl', and in the use of the adjective 'truth was less violently outraged than usually happens' (p. 55). The same books are *not* always idolised by Marianne and Willoughby, rather, the narrator tells us, 'if any difference appeared, any objection arose, it lasted no longer than till the force of her arguments and the brightness of her eyes could be displayed' (p. 56). That is, Willoughby mirrors Marianne's taste, and he does so quite consciously, in order to make himself even more attractive to her.

Indeed, Willoughby deploys all the weapons of sensibility in his pursuit. His musical talents are considerable, and he reads 'with all the sensibility and spirit' which Elinor Dashwood's love interest Edward Ferrars had unfortunately wanted (p. 58). But Willoughby's lack of reserve and good measure is problematic for Elinor – and for us, Austen's readers. The comparison between Willoughby and Edward Ferrars is striking from the outset, and hinges on matters of taste. Edward, Elinor has already told her sister, is "by no means deficient in natural taste, though he has not had opportunities of improving it" (p. 22). Edward has "an innate propriety and simplicity of taste, which in general direct him perfectly right", Elinor continues, and "his mind is well-informed, his enjoyment of books exceedingly great, his imagination lively, his observation just and correct, and his taste delicate and pure" (p. 23). What Edward lacks, for the young Marianne Dashwood, is what we might call *finesse*. *Finesse* is what Willoughby has in abundance.

Frank Churchill, too, has no shortage of *finesse*. When, towards the conclusion of *Emma*, Mr Knightley reads Frank Churchill's letter to Mrs Weston explaining his engagement to Jane Fairfax, and his behaviour towards Emma herself, Jane Austen takes care to give her readers Mr Knightley's running commentary. This is a wonderful stream of consciousness response to Frank Churchill's letter that we – and Emma herself – have already read. As a fine example of Austen's technique, it is irresistible:

"Humph! – a fine complimentary opening: – But it is his way. One man's style must not be the rule of another's..."

Very bad – though it might have been worse. – Playing a most dangerous game. Too much indebted to the event for his acquittal. – No judge of his manners by you. – Always deceived in fact by his own wishes, and regardless of little besides his own convenience. – Fancying you to have fathomed his secret. Natural enough! – his own mind full of intrigue, that he should suspect it in others. – Mystery; *Finesse* – how they pervert the understanding!" (p. 486)

Finesse: an excellent word to describe one suspected of travelling to London for a haircut. Mr Knightley's own 'plain, unaffected, gentleman-like English' is juxtaposed effectively alongside Frank Churchill's demonstration of *finesse* (p.

489). And Knightley repeatedly champions the sincerity and simplicity of the English gentleman: “My Emma, does not everything serve to prove more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?” (p. 486)

Samuel Johnson, in his 1755 dictionary, defined the word ‘Finesse’ in the following terms: ‘Finesse: Artifice; stratagem: an unnecessary word which is creeping into the language’. And where was it creeping in from, to pollute the purity of the King’s English? From France, of course, where manners, taste and ideas of politeness were formed and shaped the rest of the beau monde of Europe. For what do Captain Tilney, Frank Churchill, Henry Crawford and Willoughby, not to mention Mary Crawford, Isabella Thorpe and Lucy Steele have in common? They are all a little bit too French – too much artifice, too much finesse, too much attention to the demonstration and conspicuous display of ‘good taste’, and not enough solid morality and delicacy of feeling. Mr Knightley makes this explicit, you will remember, with his choice of vocabulary to describe Frank Churchill before he even sets eyes on him:

“your amiable young man can be amiable only in French, not in English. He may be very ‘aimable;’ have very good manners, and be very agreeable; but he can have no English delicacy towards the feelings of other people: nothing really amiable about him”. (pp. 160-161).

The easy manners, charm, and loquaciousness of Austen’s rogues is easily identifiable with eighteenth-century British ideas of the corrupting effect of French masculinity, and the championing of the English ‘gentleman’ above other models.

I find it fascinating that Jane Austen’s *Emma* – with its negative comments on the ‘aimable’ Frank Churchill – was translated into French almost immediately, appearing in Paris bookshops in 1816, just one year after the original. As such, it forms part of a vogue for English fiction to furnish the book shelves of Paris. The title selected for the French translation was *La Nouvelle Emma, ou Les Caractères Anglais du Siècle* – that is, ‘The New Emma, or English characters of the Century’. It contains a lengthy preface – the first preface to any edition of Jane Austen’s fiction, in any language. This preface is written by an anonymous French reader – perhaps the translator, who is, again, anonymous, or perhaps someone else employed by the publisher Arthus Bertrand himself. And this French translation of Jane Austen’s *Emma* opens with a clear recognition that this is a novel unlike any others. The French preface tells us, in fact, that Austen’s *Emma* is not, properly speaking, a novel at all: it is a tableau of the manners of the age which will enable the French reader to become better acquainted with their neighbours across the Channel, an ethnographic guide, if you will. At the heart of this French preface to *La Nouvelle Emma*, is a discussion of what a true ‘gentilhomme’ is. In England – the French preface tells us – this title of *gentleman* is given to everyone, just as in France everyone is called ‘monsieur’. But the true meaning of the title ‘gentleman’ signifies an accomplished man, possessing – other than good manners ‘toutes les qualités de l’esprit et du cœur’ – that is, quite literally, ‘all the qualities of wit and

heart', but it is possibly best translated as 'all the qualities of wit and sensibility'. The French author of this preface seems to have misread entirely what Austen demonstrates as true 'gentlemanly' behaviour – through the characters of Mr Knightley and indeed Robert Martin, and the comparison between the characters of Frank Churchill and indeed Mr Elton. Is the misreading on the part of the French translation wilful? Perhaps it is. One would hardly begin an advertisement to a new French translation of an English novel by saying it contained a slight on the French character. Certainly, the translation of Frank Churchill being described as 'aimable' only in French, not in the English sense of the word is presented differently for the first French readers. In the 1816 French translation, a French reader would have read that Frank Churchill could only be 'aimable' in Italian – pushing the insult further south across the Continent.

One hundred years after the publication of *Emma* in London and *La Nouvelle Emma* in Paris, George Saintsbury – the influential literary critic of the French and English novel – published his study *A History of the French Novel* (to the close of the nineteenth century). With Europe at war, George Saintsbury, in his 1917 examination of the French novel, takes 'a glance at Miss Austen'. Via a comment on Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), he examines the eighteenth-century vogue for what he calls "the affectation of the period", that is, sensibility. But 'the thing', Saintsbury tells his readers, 'was not English in origin, and never was thoroughly English at all'.² Despite his interest in Austen (and let us remember that it was George Saintsbury who coined the phrase 'Janeites' to refer to Austen's admirers and devotees), his subject here is the French novel, and he leaves consideration of the novel in English aside after this all too brief reference to Jane Austen.

But I would argue that it's time we took George Saintsbury's comments to their logical conclusion. The French and English novel in the eighteenth century, scholars are now recognising, developed side by side. And they developed in such a way that talking about national traditions in fiction before the nineteenth century is a somewhat artificial pursuit. Jane Austen – or indeed anyone who published novels in the 1800s – would have to know a great deal about the workings of French fiction in order to reject it. Austen famously claimed – in a carefully self-deprecating letter to the Prince Regent's Librarian James Stanier Clarke – that she knew only her Mother tongue, and had read very little in that. I don't believe her for one minute.

We know at the very least that Austen read the widely-translated French author Madame de Genlis: Genlis's *Alphonsine* is given short shrift in Austen's letters and Genlis's *Adelaide and Theodore* is mentioned at the end of *Emma*. I find it hard to imagine that Austen did not pick up some of the French novels in her brother's library at Godmersham Park, or indeed obtain them from circulating libraries in Bath, Southampton or here in Alton. If only we had the cache of letters that Gill Hornby imagines Cassandra Austen tracking down in the Vicarage in Kintbury in her novel *Miss Austen* (2020). If only Austen had left a reading journal, or a book of lengthy extracts from her reading, like her contemporary Frances Burney. If only she had written a lengthy preface to each of her novels, clearly marking out

her influences. But she did not, so we must look elsewhere.

Prefaces to English novels by Austen's contemporaries can certainly prove fruitful when seeking to document the influence of French sources. Indeed, key works of French fiction make appearances in, and inform the plot of, a great many British novels published during Jane Austen's lifetime, including novels that influenced Austen herself in her own writing career. Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) engages directly with Bernardin de Saint Pierre's *Paul et Virginie*, Marmontel's *Contes moraux*, Rousseau's *Emile* and many, many other works of French fiction. Frances Burney, in the preface to her novel *Evelina* first published in 1778 describes herself as 'charmed with the eloquence of Rousseau'. Burney's last novel, *The Wanderer* was published in 1814 – the same year as *Mansfield Park* – but *The Wanderer* had been well over a decade in the making. Largely drafted during Burney's ten-year residence in France with her French husband General D'Arblay, *The Wanderer* includes a heroine who is both French (by residence and language) and English (by birth), and a character, Gabriella who is wholly French, and speaks that language exclusively in conversation with the heroine. *The British Critic* – in their review of *The Wanderer* – calls Burney's Gabriella 'a true French character... in the school of Mme Cottin' and claims that the conversation between these two characters contains 'French, not English pathos,' adding 'we can therefore readily excuse our authoress from a violation of a rule of taste, in cloathing it in French garb'. This is damning *The Wanderer* with very faint praise indeed. Sophie Cottin was an extremely popular French novelist with the British reading public of the early nineteenth centuries, but her sentimental novels were not at all popular with British critics. Burney's 'violation of a rule of taste' is to include far too much of the French language in her prose: it is, for the reviewers, an affectation unworthy of the author of *Evelina*, of *Cecilia*, and of *Camilla*.

That two of the leading women novelists of the latter half of the eighteenth century – Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth – engage extensively with French fiction in their own writing is worth further reflection. These two novelists, after all, are championed by Jane Austen in her famous defence of the novel genre in her posthumously-published *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Austen's chapter five of *Northanger Abbey* is a defence that has frequently been read as being *against* the Gothic and Sentimental fiction, and *for* the nascent British realist novel. In being against sentimental fiction, it's against the kind of French fiction still popular in the early nineteenth century. In fact, anxieties about British women reading French fiction have very deep roots. In British conduct literature – the kind of reading of sermons that would no doubt make us gape as we opened the volumes – the reading of a French novel is condemned as a superficial. It is presented as a frivolous activity that will never lead to a true understanding of the French language. And indeed throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, the reading of French novels by heroines in British novels served as an important signifier: if a British heroine is reading a French novel, she is no better than she should be.

There's a tension here, of course. Because despite these anxieties about French taste, French effeminacy and French fiction, a young English lady must have a

knowledge of modern foreign languages throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century – of that, Jane Austen own family, and indeed her characters attest. Take the ‘fair Nymph’ Lucy, whom we meet in Austen’s ‘Jack and Alice’. Being induced to favour us with her ‘Life and Adventures’, we learn that she has been provided with “some of the first rate Masters, who taught” her “all the accomplishments requisite” for one of her sex and rank (p. 22). Under the instructions of these masters, she learns “Dancing, Music, Drawing and various Languages” and becomes, as a result “more accomplished than any other Taylor’s daughter in Wales” (p. 22). That the daughters of Welsh tailors were, perhaps, not the best instructed members of the United Kingdom of the 1780s makes the comparison amusing, but does not detract from the point that the learning of languages – and particularly French – was a necessary pursuit for young women.

There’s something of the Gilbert and Sullivan about Jane Austen’s juvenilia. I don’t mean, here, that there’s a direct causal influence, of course. Clearly, Jane Austen’s many visits to the theatre never included a performance of *The Gondoliers*, or other hits of the 1870s. Equally, there is no way that either Gilbert or Sullivan read the entirety of volume the first or volume the second – both manuscripts were safely in the hands of Austen family descendants in the 1870s – although they may, I suppose, have come across ‘Lady Susan’ in James Edward Austen Leigh’s *Memoir* of his aunt. I’m thinking, rather, of the similarities between the delightfully topsy-turvy burlesque that we meet in both Austen’s juvenile writings and Gilbert and Sullivan’s light opera, and of the characters who are introduced to the readers and viewers by the telling of their own tales. Think of the way in which we are introduced to Laura, the protagonist in Jane Austen’s ‘Love and Freindship’; her introductory monologue is worthy of a Modern Major General or a Princess Ida:

My Father was a native of Ireland and an inhabitant of Wales; my Mother was the natural Daughter of a Scotch Peer by an Italian Opera-Girl – I was born in Spain and received my Education at a Convent in France. [...] I was once beautiful. But lovely as I was the Graces of my Person were the least of my Perfections. Of every accomplishment customary to my sex, I was Mistress. (p. 104)

A paragon of the virtues, then, is presented to us by Jane Austen in ‘Love and Freindship’. What are Laura’s faults? ‘A sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my Friends, my Acquaintance and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if a fault it could be called’ (p. 104). And here is where I want to make the Gilbert and Sullivan and Jane Austen in her juvenilia link more explicit. Where the Victorian librettist and composer were creating a light form of English opera that challenged the dominance of badly-translated French operetta from the London stage in the 1870s, Jane Austen was light-heartedly challenging the French dominance of sensibility in the fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Don’t forget that ‘Love and Freindship’ was dedicated to Jane Austen’s cousin Eliza – Madame la Comtesse de Feuillide: the only member of the immediate

Austen family to be French through marriage, and indeed through her education. Deirdre Le Faye's 'Life and Letters' of this 'Outlandish Cousin' of the Austen family documents the young Eliza Hancock's time in France, and her descriptions of the court of France and French fashion must have delighted the Austen family on her visits to them.

In December 1786, Philadelphia Hancock, Madame de Feuillide and Eliza's son Hastings spent Christmas with the Austens at Steventon, bringing a gift of the French author Arnaud Berquin's *L'Ami des Enfants* – possibly, as Deirdre Le Faye suggests, a gift for Jane's 11th birthday, and certainly owned by her: the name Jane Austen is on the fly-leaves. This French work – which consists of short, moralistic tales for young children – was a particularly appropriate gift, and one that was mirrored for the next generation of Austen family girls, Jane and Cassandra's nieces. Aunt Cassandra bought a copy of Madame de Genlis's French plays for children for her niece and goddaughter Caroline Austen – that copy is now in the collection at Chawton House, thanks to the generosity of Texan collector Sandra Clark. Another work that has just made its way into the collection thanks to the generosity of the North American Friends of Chawton House is Anna Lefroy's copy of Madame le Prince de Beaumont's *Magasin des Enfants*, gifted to Anna by her Steventon neighbour Mrs Augusta Bramston in 1802. The reading of short French moral tales and plays for children formed a very important part of the education of young girls, even while the reading of French sentimental fiction was morally suspect.

A more recent archival discovery is Karen Ievers's purchase of a photograph album including pictures of the nineteenth century Knight family descendants in Ireland, and here at Chawton House. Austen Society members will have read the account of 'Edward Austen Knight's descendants in Ireland' by Karen Ievers with Sophia Hillan in last year's Society report. Karen purchased the album in November 2018, and the news of her discovery made quite a splash at the beginning of 2019. But the album is interesting for more reasons than for the photographs of Austen's nieces, nephews, and other descendants of the Austen, Knight and Hill families – even those extraordinary photographs of the wedding! For in the manuscript are several pages in French, which turn out to be extensive extracts of published works of French prose and poetry. The manuscript pages that form part of the Knight and Hill family photograph album are entirely typical of the kind of extracting that was popular and important for young ladies of deep reflection in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In fact, Karen Ievers's Knight/Hill photograph album is not, I believe, a photograph album at all. It is a book of extracts, repurposed for photographs decades after it was begun.

In the Knight/Hill family album, the process of extracting from French texts serves a dual purpose – to assist with or reinforce the learning of the French language, as well as to record *bons mots* or maxims that function as conduct literature. I am far less expert on the matter of Marianne Knight's handwriting than Sophia Hillan, but we both think that the writing on the photograph album, and in the French manuscript itself, where the paper is watermarked 1810, may

well be Marianne's, the Knight niece described as being 'most like aunt Jane'. It's worth reminding ourselves, at this stage, that there were five Knight daughters that would have been in the schoolroom at Godmersham Park in the opening decades of the nineteenth century: Fanny, Elizabeth, Marianne, Louisa and Cassandra Jane. All of them would have received an education befitting their status, all of them would have had training in French. It is clear to me from the photographs that Karen levers was good enough to send me that the extracts collected in these pages are all from French texts published in the 1800s, and indeed widely anthologised. We encounter, for example, Gabriel Legouvé's *Le mérite des femmes*, published at some point in 1801. Translated, Legouvé's title is Women's Worth, and this seems to have been an extremely popular poem in the early nineteenth century – or rather, it was one that was to be found in a variety of printed 'Elegant Extracts' – very entertaining. Marianne Knight – or whoever copied out the extract from it that we find in Karen levers's photo album – selected a lengthy section about friendship being the sister of love from *Le Merite des femmes* and having more sweetness with women: nothing ungallant, nothing that did not breathe a compliment to the sex, is included in these pages of extracts – perhaps you have already picked up my reference to Austen's own fiction here?

One can only speculate about what makes any collator of extracts write down certain selections from a text, and not others. Jane Austen, at any rate, seems to have felt the whole activity a somewhat frivolous female pursuit. Do recollect her scenes in *Emma*, when the eponymous heroine and Harriet Smith are creating their own 'thin quarto of hot-pressed paper', 'ornamented with cyphers and trophies': this, Austen's narrator tells us, is the 'only literary pursuit' in which the two young women are engaged, it is the 'only mental provision' that Harriet is making for the evening of her life (pp. 73-74). In Harriet Smith's book of extracts, 'Kitty, a fair but frozen maid' sits alongside anything that Mr Elton can recollect that 'breathes a compliment to the sex' (p. 74). Mr Elton – on presenting a charade the young women have already transcribed some pages ago – is invited to write one himself, to secure its freshness. And there are some French extracts in the Knight/Hill photo album that I have not yet identified an original for – leaving open the tantalising possibility that some Mr Eltonesque friend of the Knight family – or some Eliza de Feuillide – may have contributed their own words. Certainly, the taste for French – despite anxieties about French taste – remained in the Austen and Knight families well into the nineteenth century.

Much remains to be done, and said, and written, about the role of French in the lives of the Austen and Knight families in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and on the influence of the French novel on the English realist novel as Jane Austen was to develop it. But you will be able to tell, from the tell-tale disappearance of these pages, that we are hastening together towards the end of this exploration. So let me conclude, then, with the novel I haven't mentioned directly at all as yet (although I hope you have picked up some allusions): that is, with *Pride and Prejudice*. Think of Lady Catherine's horror on learning that the five Bennet daughters were brought up at home without a governess!, and of the five Knight

daughters at Godmersham Park, learning the accomplishments appropriate to their sex and class. Think of Lady Catherine's self-professed true enjoyment of music and of her excellent natural taste and remember the very frequent demonstrations Austen gives us of her ill-breeding. Think of Pemberley 'where natural beauty has been so little counteracted by an awkward taste' its furniture and fittings 'neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendour and more of real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings' (p. 271-272). And remember Lady Catherine's name – De Bourgh – the prefix 'De' so very reminiscent of the Mesdames de Scuderies and de Lafayettes, the Mesdames de Genlis and de Staels, and of Austen's own French translator Isabelle de Montolieu. Austen knew these writers. But she was clear that her own novels would blaze a different trail. Lucky us, who get to read, reread, and think about them 200 years after Jane Austen sent them out into the world from this very village.

Notes:

1. All references to Austen's own fiction are to the pagination of the Cambridge University Press editions.
2. George Saintsbury, *A History of the French Novel*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1917).

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Sophie Reynolds is the Collections and Interpretations Manager at Jane Austen's House. She is responsible for the care and management of the Museum collection, acquisitions, displays and events. Sophie joined the Museum in November 2018 from the V&A, where she had previously worked for ten years managing a variety of festivals and special projects for the Department of Theatre and Performance.

Peter Sabor holds a Canada Research Chair at McGill University, Montreal, where he is also Director of the Burney Centre. He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Emma* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Principal Investigator for the website *Reading with Austen* (www.readingwithausten.com).

Kathryn Sutherland is Senior Research fellow, St Anne's College, Oxford, and a trustee at Jane Austen's House. She is editor of *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts*, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), and of the free access digital edition www.janeausten.ac.uk

Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st December 2019 for The Jane Austen Society

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2019. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal objective of the Society is as follows:

To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family.

The objective is primarily achieved by the production of publications relating to the life and works of Jane Austen, through education and by contributions to academic debate regarding Jane Austen, her works and family.

The Society sought to increase its activities in the field of education through the work of the Education Sub-committee.

The Society, where appropriate, may seek to preserve artefacts relating to Jane Austen, either by purchase or by contributions towards expenses. In particular it may contribute to projects at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton.

The Society's objectives for the year were to build on the progress made in previous years and to raise the profile of the Society by the production of new articles and publications.

Public Benefit

When planning activities and considering the making of grants, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of education and the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science.

The trustees believe that the Society fulfils these objectives through its educational activities, by its contribution to historical research regarding Jane Austen and the preservation of artefacts relating to Jane Austen and the Austen family.

Significant activities

The Society did not produce or reprint any publications in the year. Following the retirement of Patrick Stokes as the conference organiser, the 2019 conference was organised by the Society itself and was held in Hampshire in September 2019.

Two grants totalling £150 were made to the pupils of Bristol Grammar School in respect of the Society's essay prize.

In anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth in 2025, the trustees launched a fundraising initiative in 2018 to support the educational role of the society. This is known as the "Jane Austen 250 Fund" and although an unrestricted fund, a purpose which the trustees specifically wish to support is the educational activity of the Jane Austen's House Museum.

No applications were received for grants from the educational fund during the year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 5 of these financial statements.

There was a surplus of income over expenditure on the general fund of £1,294 in the year (2018 surplus £779). This surplus was increased by an increase in the value of the Society's investments of 32,639 (2018 - decrease £5,145).

The Jane Austen Society

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

FUTURE PLANS

The trustees' aims in the future are to continue to promote the activities of the Society, by the production of publications, the organisation of conferences and any other activities which they consider appropriate.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Jane Austen Society is governed by the Constitution adopted on 16th July 1994 as amended on 26th July 2003.

Organisational structure

The Society is administered by the trustees, who in accordance with the constitution number not less than 10 nor more than 17.

All trustees (including the officers) are elected by postal ballot of the members of the Society for a period of five years and are then eligible for re-election. The trustees in addition may appoint up to four co-opted members.

On appointment trustees are given information on the role of a trustee and Charity Law.

The trustees met three times during the year, and in addition a joint meeting was held with representatives of the branches and groups.

Two sub-committees meet as and when required to deal with the processes relating to the publications and the educational activities of the Society.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1040613

Principal address

Matthew Huntley Esq
The Honorary Treasurer
11 Grange Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9RT

Trustees

Fiona Ainsworth
Sharron Bassett
Emma Clery (appointed 13.7.19)
Marion Davies (appointed 13.7.19)
Anthony Finney (resigned 13.7.19)
Clare Graham
Mary Hogg
Matthew Huntley - Honorary Treasurer
Richard Jenkyns - Chairman
Marilyn Joice
Michael Kenning - Vice Chairman
Maggie Lane Jameson (resigned 13.7.19)
Elizabeth Proudman
David Richardson
Fiona Riley (appointed 13.7.19)
Maureen Stiller - Honorary Secretary
Heather Thomas (appointed 13.7.19)

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Independent Examiner

D A Sanders BA (Hons) FCA
Sheen Stickland Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

Bankers

TSB Bank plc
40 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
SO23 9RT

EVENTS SINCE THE END OF THE YEAR

Information relating to events since the end of the year is given in the notes to the financial statements.

RESERVES

The Society's policy regarding reserves is detailed in note 1 on page 8 of these accounts. The trustees consider, on the basis of current information available, that these funds are adequate to meet their known future commitments.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 2nd June 2020 and signed on its behalf by:


.....
Richard Jenkyns - Trustee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Jane Austen Society

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Jane Austen Society

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Jane Austen Society (the Trust) for the year ended 31st December 2019.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').


I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



D A Sanders BA (Hons) FCA
Sheen Stickland Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

22nd June 2020

The Jane Austen Society

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

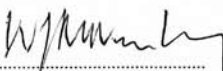
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2019 Total funds £	2018 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		25,010	-	25,010	21,649
Other charitable activities	2	57,645	-	57,645	30,067
Investment income	3	<u>6,406</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,406</u>	<u>6,281</u>
Total		89,061	-	89,061	57,997
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		32	-	32	-
Charitable activities					
Charitable activities		<u>83,480</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>83,480</u>	<u>56,700</u>
Total		83,512	-	83,512	56,700
Net gains/(losses) on investments		<u>32,369</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,369</u>	<u>(5,145)</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		37,918	-	37,918	(3,848)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>278,844</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>279,844</u>	<u>283,692</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>316,762</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>317,762</u>	<u>279,844</u>

The Jane Austen Society

Balance Sheet
31st December 2019

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2019 Total funds £	2018 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Heritage assets	7	60,000	-	60,000	60,000
Investments	8	<u>213,392</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>213,392</u>	<u>181,023</u>
		273,392	-	273,392	241,023
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	9	583	-	583	459
Debtors	10	5,347	-	5,347	4,192
Cash at bank		<u>42,630</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>43,630</u>	<u>39,870</u>
		48,560	1,000	49,560	44,521
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	11	(5,190)	-	(5,190)	(5,700)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>43,370</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>44,370</u>	<u>38,821</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>316,762</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>317,762</u>	<u>279,844</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>316,762</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>317,762</u>	<u>279,844</u>
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				316,762	278,844
Restricted funds				<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>317,762</u>	<u>279,844</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 2nd June 2020 and were signed on its behalf by:


Matthew Huntley - Trustee


Richard Jenkyns - Trustee

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1st January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102))', 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland - (FRS102)' and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with the exception of investments which are included at market value, as modified by the revaluation of certain assets.

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis as the trustees do not consider that the effects of Covid-19 will impact on the Society's ability to continue to operate.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Stocks

Prior to 31st December 2017, purchases of publications for resale were written off in equal instalments over a period of five years. Stocks therefore represented the unamortised portion of the last four years purchases. Given the level of sales of publications in recent years, the trustees made the decision to write off the balance of the stock of publications in the year ended 31st December 2017.

Stocks held at branches of publications purchased direct from suppliers by those branches are not shown in the accounts.

Stocks of fundraising items for resale are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted Fund is a fund of which the trustees of the Society have unrestricted authority to spend the income and the capital to further the objectives of the Jane Austen Society.

Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds earmarked for particular purposes by the trustees of the Society in the exercise of their discretionary powers.

Restricted Funds are funds which are subject to a restriction as to their use.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Fund accounting

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Heritage assets

As explained further in note 7 to the financial statements, it is proposed that the majority of the heritage assets owned by the Society are to be gifted to Jane Austen's House Museum in the year ended 31st December 2020. In the opinion of the trustees therefore, as these assets will be disposed of by the charity in the short or medium term, the cost of obtaining a reliable valuation of these items would not be justified by the usefulness of the information to the users of the accounts or to the charity for its own stewardship purposes and these assets are not recognised on the balance sheet of the charity.

The remaining heritage asset as detailed in note 7 to the financial statements will remain the property of the Society. Under the provisions of the Charities SORP this asset will now be included on the balance sheet at its latest valuation.

As this represents a change of accounting policy the fund balances as at 1st January 2018 have been restated to reflect this as shown in note 5 to the financial statements.

Reserves

The balance of the general fund (excluding designated funds and the value of heritage assets) represents approximately nine months expenditure which the trustees consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

£120,000 of the legacies received in the years ended 31st December 2003 and 31st December 2004 was transferred to a designated fund. It was originally intended that the income from this fund would be used to provide travel bursaries to those wishing to carry out studies in furtherance of the charitable objects of the Society. It has now been decided by the trustees that this fund should be re-designated to cover a wider range of educational activities.

Branches and Groups

Branches of the Society are defined in charity law as an integral part of the Society and as such enjoy various privileges and responsibilities in regard to the Society. In particular a branch can call upon the Society for financial support and is covered by the public liability insurance of the Society. The financial results of the branches are incorporated into the Society's statement of financial activities and the assets and liabilities of branches are included in the Society's balance sheet.

A group is an informal gathering of members of the Society (or others) from a particular area and has no connection in law with The Jane Austen Society, and the financial activities of groups are not included in these accounts.

Details of activities of the branches are shown in note 15 to the accounts.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

2. OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2019	2018
	£	£
Sales of publications	1,474	882
Income from events	22,314	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,154	1,155
Sale of fundraising items	316	-
Income of branches	<u>32,387</u>	<u>28,030</u>
	<u>57,645</u>	<u>30,067</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2019	2018
	£	£
Income from listed investments	<u>6,406</u>	<u>6,281</u>

4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2019 nor for the year ended 31st December 2018.

Trustees' expenses

During the year a total of £2,742 was reimbursed to sixteen trustees in respect of travelling and other expenses (2018 - £2,218).

5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	21,649	-	21,649
Other charitable activities	30,067	-	30,067
Investment income	<u>6,281</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,281</u>
Total	57,997	-	57,997
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Charitable activities	56,700	-	56,700
Net gains/(losses) on investments	<u>(5,145)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(5,145)</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(3,848)	-	(3,848)

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

5. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward			
As previously reported	222,692	1,000	223,692
Prior year adjustment	<u>60,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,000</u>
As restated	<u>282,692</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>283,692</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u><u>278,844</u></u>	<u><u>1,000</u></u>	<u><u>279,844</u></u>

6. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging

	2019 £	2018 £
Independent examiner's remuneration	1,450	1,350
Other accountancy fees	<u>1,260</u>	<u>1,170</u>
	<u><u>2,710</u></u>	<u><u>2,520</u></u>

7. HERITAGE ASSETS

	Total £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2019	<u>60,000</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31st December 2019	<u><u>60,000</u></u>
At 31st December 2018	<u><u>60,000</u></u>

Over many years the Society has been given or has purchased mementoes of Jane Austen comprising items of jewellery, furniture and early editions of Jane Austen's work etc. which are maintained on public display at the Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton. Portraits of various members of the Austen family have also been donated to the Society over the years.

At a meeting of the trustees in January 2019 it was decided that the items currently on loan to Jane Austen's House Museum would be offered to the museum as a gift. This decision was notified to the members at the Annual General Meeting of the Society in July 2019.

It was expected that this process would be completed in the year ended 31st December 2019 but this did not prove possible. Notification of the Society's intention has been published in its own newsletter, the museum's newsletter and a major national newspaper. In the event that no objections are received from the original donors of the assets then the transfer will take place by deed of gift in the year ended 31st December 2020.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

7. HERITAGE ASSETS - continued

In addition to the items at the Jane Austen's House Museum, the Society also has ownership of a portrait of Edward Austen-Knight which was acquired by the Society in 1953. This portrait is now on display at Chawton House Library under a long term loan agreement. This is now included in the financial statements as a heritage asset as set out above. As this represents a change of accounting policy the balances as at 1st January 2018 have been restated to reflect this as shown in note 5 to the financial statements.

The Society has a clear duty of care for these assets and to make them available for the enjoyment and education of the public as far as possible, commensurate with their long term care and preservation. The highest possible standards of collection management are applied by those who hold the collection. All enquiries and requests for information will be considered on their merits subject to appropriate security and data protection guidelines.

The Society does not envisage the acquisition of any heritage assets in the future but will continue to support the Jane Austen's House Museum in any appropriate acquisition by the museum, in particular by the use of funds held in the 250 Fund.

8. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	Listed investments £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1st January 2019	181,023
Revaluations	<u>32,369</u>
At 31st December 2019	<u>213,392</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31st December 2019	<u>213,392</u>
At 31st December 2018	<u>181,023</u>

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

Investments at 31st December 2019 represents 12,605 units in the COIF Charities Investment Fund.

The historical cost of fixed asset investments at 31st December 2019 was £154,922 (2018 - £154,922).

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**
9. STOCKS

	2019	2018
	£	£
Fundraising items for resale	<u>583</u>	<u>459</u>

10. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2019	2018
	£	£
Other debtors	5,147	2,899
Prepayments	<u>200</u>	<u>1,293</u>
	<u>5,347</u>	<u>4,192</u>

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2019	2018
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	<u>5,190</u>	<u>5,700</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.19	Net movement	Transfers between funds	At 31.12.19
	£	in funds	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	135,676	33,663	6,650	175,989
Life membership fund	6,650	-	(6,650)	-
Education fund	126,000	-	-	126,000
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	10,000	-	-	10,000
250 fund	<u>518</u>	<u>4,255</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,773</u>
	278,844	37,918	-	316,762
Restricted funds				
Acquisition fund	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>279,844</u>	<u>37,918</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>317,762</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Gains and losses	Movement in funds
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	84,532	(83,238)	32,369	33,663
250 fund	<u>4,529</u>	<u>(274)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,255</u>
	<u>89,061</u>	<u>(83,512)</u>	<u>32,369</u>	<u>37,918</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>89,061</u>	<u>(83,512)</u>	<u>32,369</u>	<u>37,918</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.18 £	Heritage asset adjustment £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.18 £
Unrestricted funds					
General fund	79,802	60,000	(4,366)	240	135,676
Life membership fund	6,890	-	-	(240)	6,650
Education fund	126,000	-	-	-	126,000
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
250 fund	-	-	518	-	518
	222,692	60,000	(3,848)	-	278,844
Restricted funds					
Acquisition fund	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>223,692</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>(3,848)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>279,844</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	55,777	(54,998)	(5,145)	(4,366)
250 fund	2,220	(1,702)	-	518
	57,997	(56,700)	(5,145)	(3,848)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>57,997</u>	<u>(56,700)</u>	<u>(5,145)</u>	<u>(3,848)</u>

For several years the Life Membership Fund has included a provision of £6,500 towards the costs associated with those life members who joined the Society prior to 1985. Given the reducing numbers of life members, the trustees consider that this provision is no longer required and it has been released to the General Fund.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2019**

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31st December 2019.

14. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

Following the end of the financial year, the effects of Covid-19 have impacted on the affairs of the Society.

The Society's 2019 Annual General Meeting has been cancelled and will be replaced by a virtual forum. This, however, will cost considerably less than the usual event.

It is hoped that the York conference arranged for September 2020 will go ahead as planned but this will depend both on the situation with Covid-19 and the number of applications.

The value of the Society's investment as shown in note 8 to the financial statements had fallen to a low point of £179,359 at 19th March 2020 but had recovered to £201,227 by 30th April 2020.

The trustees do not consider that there will be any lasting impact on the finances of the Society either with respect to subscriptions and donations or investment income in the long term or on its ability to continue to operate.

15. BRANCHES

	Midlands £	Kent £	Northern £	Scotland £	South West £	Total £
Income						
Subscriptions	571	941	712	971	700	3,895
Income from events	2,729	2,529	3,386	2,731	16,397	27,772
Sales of publications	-	138	-	-	234	372
Donations	-	-	16	321	-	337
Interest	3	-	3	5	-	11
Other income	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>3,303</u>	<u>3,608</u>	<u>4,117</u>	<u>4,028</u>	<u>17,331</u>	<u>32,387</u>
Expenses						
Expenses of events	2,186	2,434	2,251	3,090	18,579	28,540
Cost of publications	515	956	597	-	38	2,106
Donations	-	250	-	-	-	250
Administration expenses	<u>322</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>431</u>	<u>1,197</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>2,326</u>
	<u>3,023</u>	<u>3,990</u>	<u>3,279</u>	<u>4,287</u>	<u>18,643</u>	<u>33,222</u>
	<u>280</u>	<u>(382)</u>	<u>838</u>	<u>(259)</u>	<u>(1,312)</u>	<u>(835)</u>

The Jane Austen Society

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Annual subscriptions received	14,581	15,380
Gift Aid tax recoverable	2,742	2,609
Sundry donations and receipts	<u>7,687</u>	<u>3,660</u>
	25,010	21,649
Other charitable activities		
Sales of publications	1,474	882
Income from events	22,314	-
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,154	1,155
Sale of fundraising items	316	-
Income of branches	<u>32,387</u>	<u>28,030</u>
	57,645	30,067
Investment income		
Income from listed investments	<u>6,406</u>	<u>6,281</u>
Total incoming resources	89,061	57,997
EXPENDITURE		
Other trading activities		
Purchase of fundraising Items (after stock adjustment)	32	-
Charitable activities		
Printing and stationery	307	234
Subscriptions	25	20
Insurance	544	575
Sundry expenses	-	63
Newsletter	6,558	6,093
Expenses of events	21,700	-
Members' database	117	481
Annual General Meeting	9,519	8,795
Annual Report	4,359	4,476
Bank charges	819	799
Expenses of branches	33,222	27,641
Grants to institutions	<u>150</u>	<u>1,750</u>
	77,320	50,927

The Jane Austen Society

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Support costs		
Management		
Trustees' expenses	1,895	1,952
Governance costs		
Accountancy fees	2,710	2,520
Legal and professional fees	<u>1,555</u>	<u>1,301</u>
	<u>4,265</u>	<u>3,821</u>
Total resources expended	<u>83,512</u>	<u>56,700</u>
Net income	<u>5,549</u>	<u>1,297</u>

